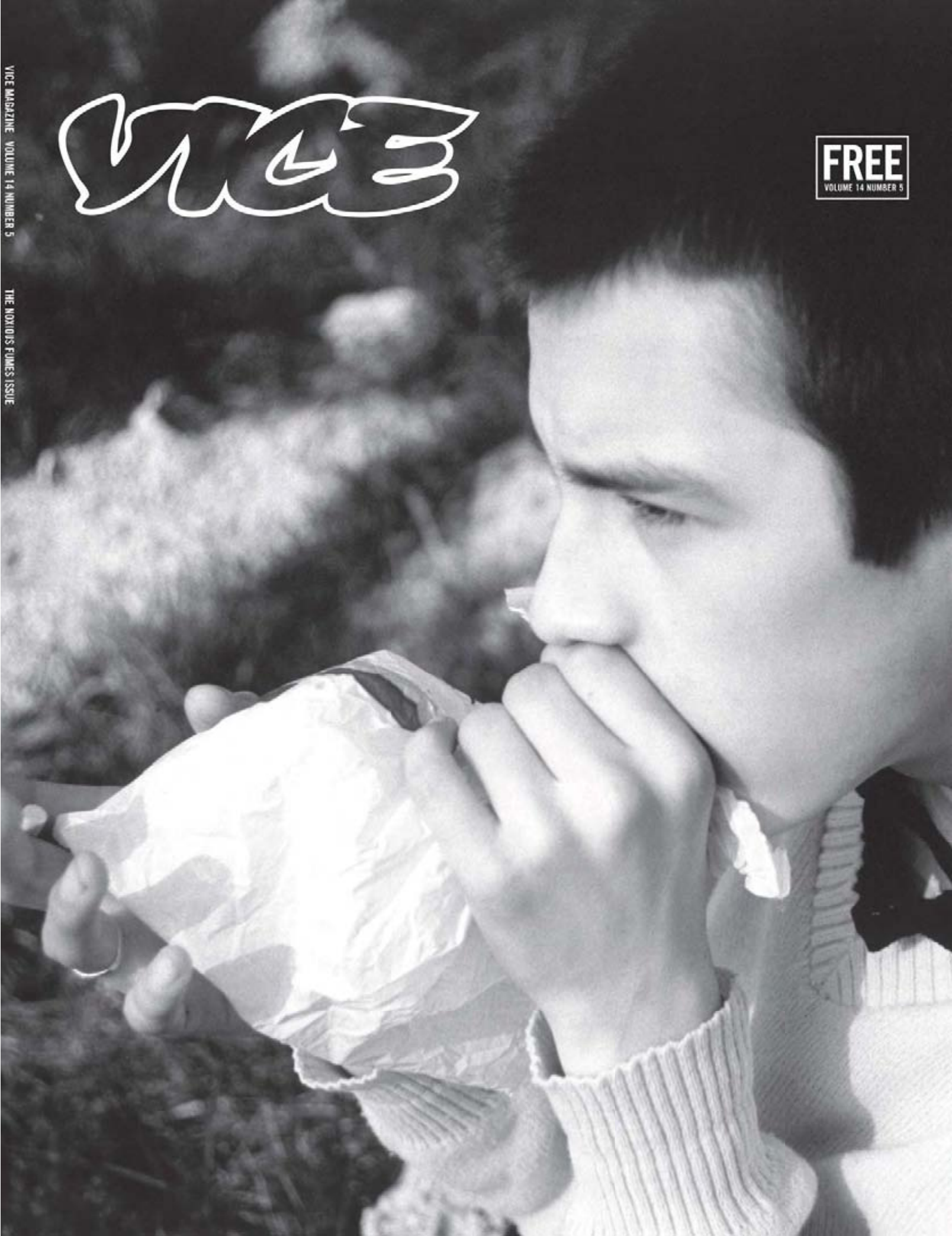
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THE NOXIOUS FUMES ISSUE

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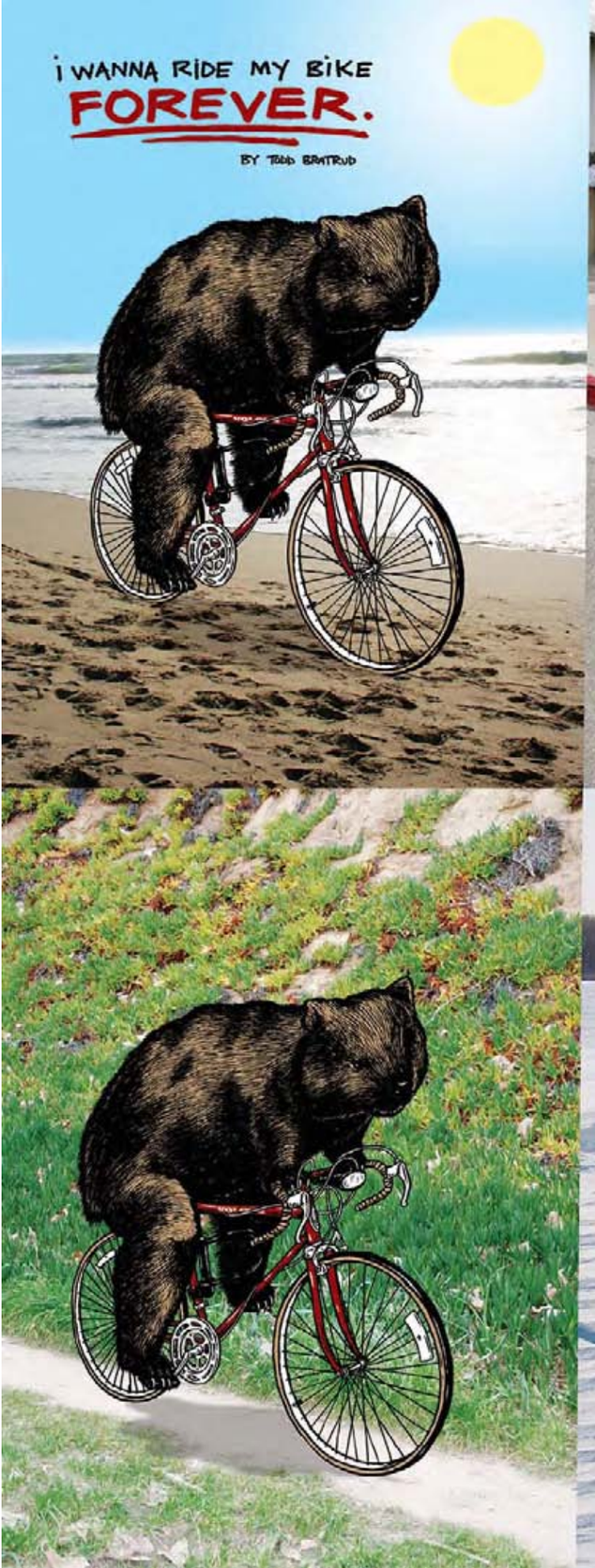
I WANNA RIDE MY BIKE FOREVER.

BY Todd BRATRud



This Todd Bratrud comic is an excerpt from 'Volcomics', a 56-page comic book and international drawing show presented in support of Volcom's Fall 2007 Featured Artist Series line featuring the work of Travis Millard, Mel Kadel, Jim Phillips, Kali Rike, Haculla, Mike Ahc, Michael Sieben, Jamie-Lynn, Mark Appleyard, Matt French and Todd Bratrud

Find out more about the Volcomics project and the Volcom Featured Artist Series at volcom.com

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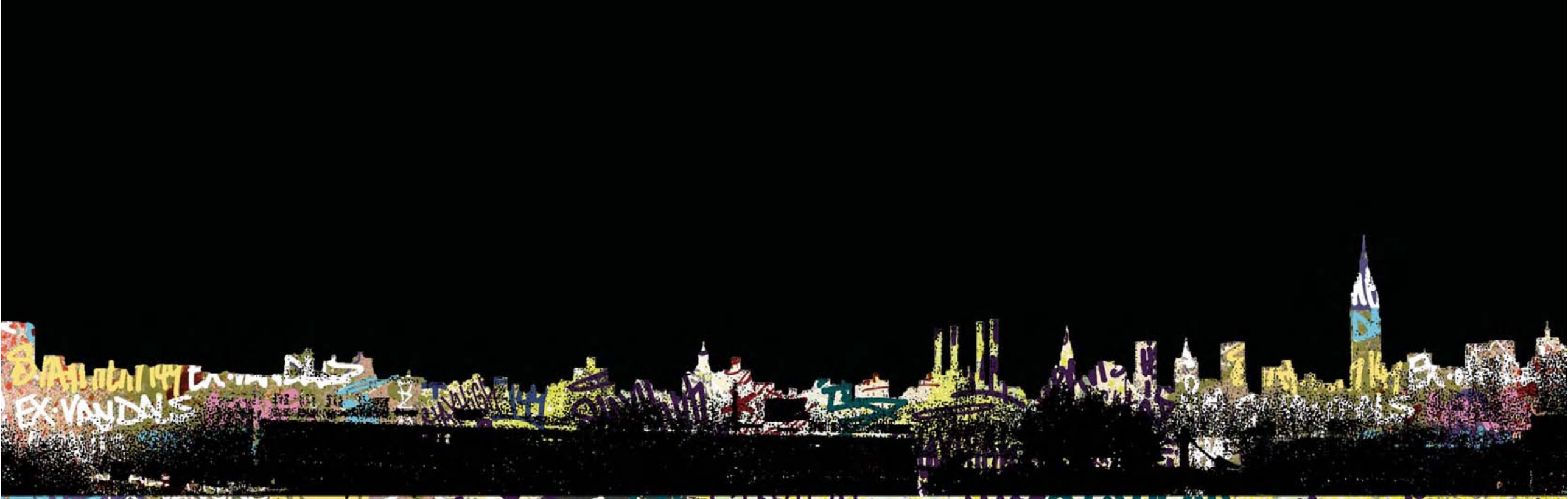

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Melissa Musser's graduation photo, Michigan, 1995. "This wasn't for the yearbook, it was a 'memory photo' to hand out to friends and family. Students would pose with their favorite things, like sports equipment, for example. I brought my cat because that was my favorite thing. I think it was the photographer's suggestion to lie down with the pillow."

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Cover photo by Gavin Watson

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triple5soul.com

Jerry Hsu auditions for this month's video-chat fashion feature. He didn't make the cut (boobs too small). For the real eye-poppers, see page 85.

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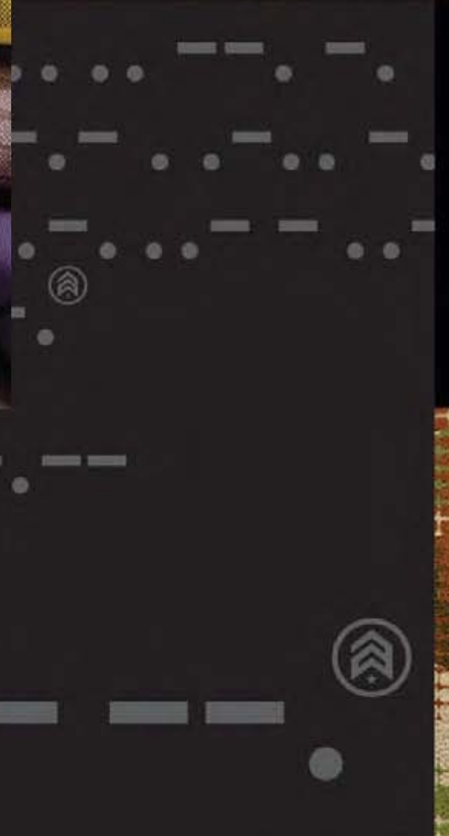

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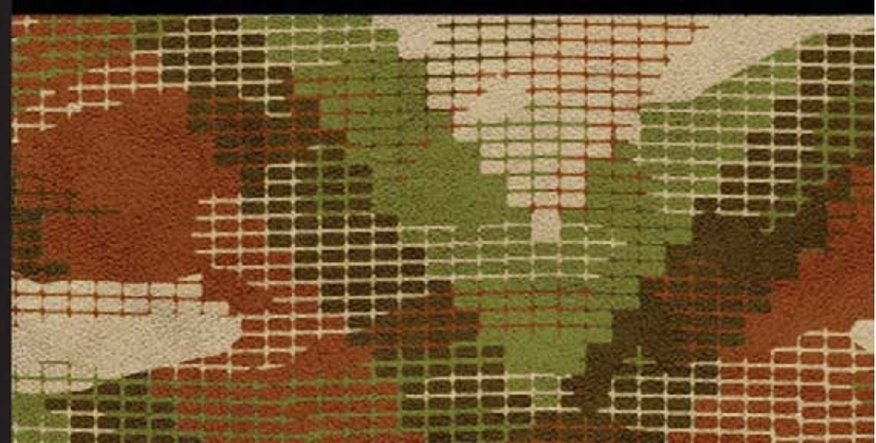

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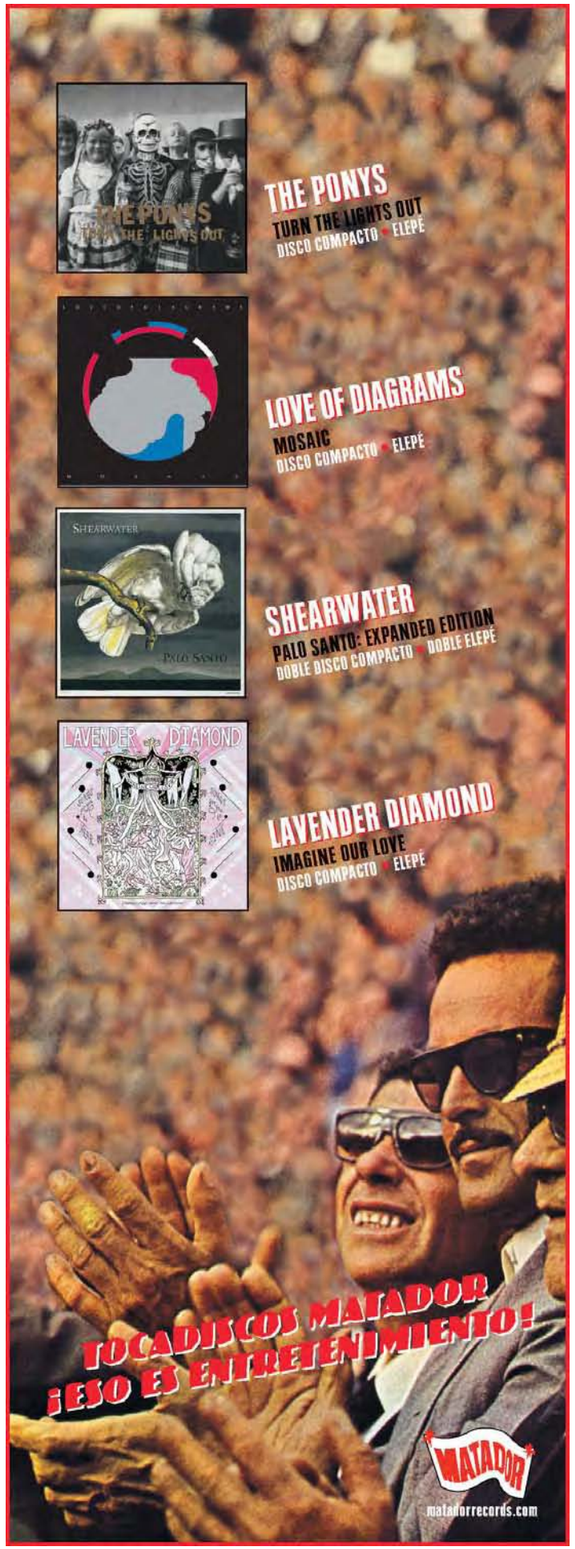


EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

BETHANY BLACK We've asked Bethany to shoot three things for us so far and each time we've either canceled the shoot at the last minute or run the photo with no photo credit. Whoops. One more bridge burned for ol' *Vicey*. But we needed someone to shoot the LA band No Age and we know she's pals with them so we called her and said, "Listen, we know we've fucked up in the past, but can you shoot these dudes? We'll make you Employee of the Month." And so, the circle of forgiveness was complete.

See THANKS, DAD, *Page 111*

ROCCO CASTORO Rocco is a smart, diligent, quiet guy with a BS in journalism who comes to the office four days a week, writes stories about crazy people, does tons of the annoying, invisible stuff that goes into making a magazine, and deletes all of the message-board comments that are "off topic," all while maintaining a general vibe of "happy to be here." And every time we make fun of his name, he smiles like, "Aw, that's a funny one." He started off as an intern but has sort of morphed into a freelancer with an office who also really likes to scan stuff for us.

See GOD'S PUBLICIST, *page 38*

BILLY MILLER Billy is the editor and publisher of *Straight to Hell*, *aka The Manhattan Review of Unnatural Acts*, a journal of reader-submitted, raunchy gay-sex stories that's been around for four decades. Four decades! That's a lotta back-alley BJs. When Billy came into the office to drop off the photos he took for his article about a town full of psychics, he also brought us a racy *Straight to Hell* calendar, which our associate editor Thomas put above his desk, right in his staring-off-into-space sight line. So now, whenever he spaces out, he gets an eyeful of man-cock and it jolts him out of his reverie and right back into working. His productivity is skyrocketing. Thanks, Billy!

See PSYCHIC TOWN, USA, *page 49*

DAMON O'BANION Damon passed away on March 23 in Austin. He was an invaluable friend to *Vice* and many in the music world, and his ever-present grin and mad-scientist-like enthusiasm were a joy to behold. He was an artist, a writer, a musician, and one of the best people we ever met. You may have never heard of him but his legacy is large and the world is a lit-tle sadder without him. Anyway he wouldn't want us moping around, so go paint a picture or write a story or, better yet, go start a fucking band.

IRAQI FELINES

Dear *Vice*,

I love the Iraq Issue. Being born in Baghdad yet raised in Seattle, I am learning a lot about my country through this issue, at least the stuff that matters anyway. I wanted to comment on "Baghdad Kitty" because I remember my mom telling me about the cats in Iraq. They aren't the soft bundles of joy Raghda so graciously posts for us to enjoy… From what I understand they look more like decrepit rib cages covered with a thin layer of infected flesh and patches of fucked-up fur. Which is probably why Raghda decided to post pictures of her favorite kittens, because the ones in Iraq don't make you feel soft and squishy inside, they make you want to vomit. Poor things. I was in Amman, Jordan, a couple years ago and witnessed a few for myself. They were lurking around a dumpster plotting to jump the next innocent victim walking by with some fresh kebab takeout. They didn't even look like cats, more like mutated anorexic giant rats.

NISREEN EL-SAADOUN
Via email

Thanks, that's really depressing. Maybe American soldiers should be mercy-killing those things.

BIKE PUNK (GET IT?)

Dear *Vice*,

I was wondering if anyone on your New York staff could recommend some good biking territory in the city or any of the boroughs. After reading *The Vice Guide to NYC*, I thought it might be worthwhile to ask for some good routes (in addition to all the great tips on quality boozing). I'll be visiting New York for the first time and I'm planning on spending at least a day by myself riding around the city and trying to see some of the lesser-known and more out-of-the-way sightseeing spots (also, it would be rad if you had any suggestions for interesting places to visit). So anyway, any info you could send my way would be greatly appreciated. Also, I am aware of the difficulty in riding in Manhattan, and though I'm a messenger out here in Denver, I still assume it's going to be a bit daunting. So if it's possible, suggestions for more out-of-the-way spots would be helpful. Lastly, if none of this is possible, then no big whup. Thanks for all the work you do, you guys run a great mag.

Sincerely,
KYLE HEGGE
Denver, CO

Sure, Kyle, here's a fun little day trek some of us around the office like to make whenever we've got a free Sunday and the weather's nice: If you're starting in Manhattan, head across the Williamsburg Bridge, then follow Broadway (the Brooklyn one) east for about five miles. Hang a right on Conway Street and it'll take you right up into Evergreen Cemetery, a prime place for a scenic afternoon picnic (just grab some sandwiches from one of the many great joints lining Bushwick Ave). From there you'll want to head down Granville Payne Ave until it hits Linden Blvd. Take a left, then turn right at Fountain Ave and follow it about half a mile south to a quiet little inlet of Jamaica Bay that even most of the locals don't know about. If you get out of there by late afternoon, take Flatlands Ave west until it turns into Kings Hwy, then take a left on Ocean Ave, and you should be able to hit Coney Island in time for sunset.

MIND READERS?

Yo *Vice*,

You want to spook me out a little more? I was just reading through the guide to homemade tattoos and reminiscing about when I got busted by my mom trying to put a five-pointed star on my ankle (give me a break, I was 14 and it was the 90s), and that got me wondering where I had picked up my technique. Then it occurred to me: *Christiane F.*, one of the very movies chosen in the movies-that-made-us-want-to-do-drugs article. But that isn't even the thing that creeped me out. What did was, the night I read that article and had that revelation, I went over to my gay friend's house to hang out, and what had just arrived from Netflix and was blaring from his TV when I walked in? Oh, just *Christiane* fucking *F.* AND THEN, what's the first thing he starts talking to me about? I don't know, just the straight guy he works with who he's been trying to "convert" for the past two weeks. And, no, he hadn't seen the issue and was just trying to mess with me. It was genuinely nutz. Anyways, you probably didn't try to set up all those tie-ins, but if you did, congrats. You wigged the living shit out of me (for a couple minutes).

Keep up the stuff,
HELEN BARLINGTON
San Jose, CA

Carl Jung called that "synchronicity." We call it "having our finger on the zeitgeist of the pulse of today's valuable, trendsetting 18- to 24-year-old demographic in this current cultural moment." That's how we know that you should listen to nothing but the Smiths and call everything "stoops" and "randers." Oh, wait—don't. Go read pages 40 and 46 in this issue instead. Quick!

NUTS FOR GUNS

Hey *Vice*,

Could you do a Gun Issue? I know there are hundreds of gun mags out there tailored to homicidal wannabes and backwoods crazies but I think the views your mag has on guns would be boss. And who could resist going in the woods, throwing a few back, and unloading a couple of clips into some old dishes? Have you ever shot an AK? You have no clue what you're missing.

Oh, and kudos for the last few issues (fiction, girls, Iraq, etc.). Your mag is the closest thing to cool I can get here in Ohio.

IAN FITCH
Via email

We aren't doing themes anymore for a while. And while we are also fans of firearms, we've done enough on them lately. Go to VBS.tv and watch the episode of *Americana* where we hang out at our favorite range.

PS: Shooting AKs is wildly overrated. It's for day-trippers who want to go, "I shot a big crazy gun." Just focus on perfecting your 9mm handling and aim.

MAPQUESTER

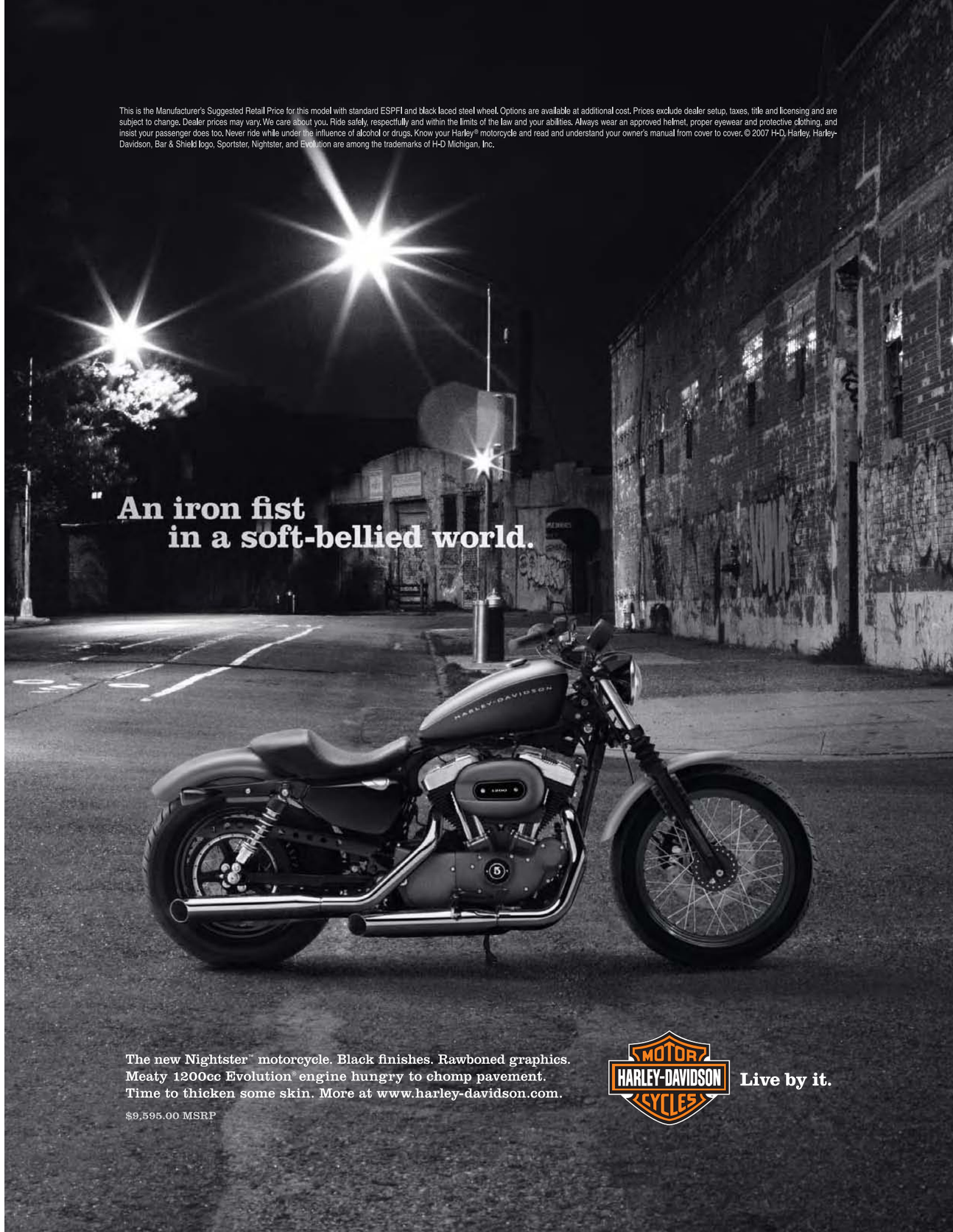
Dear *Vice*,

Man, you guys kill me. Tell your line editors (or whatever you call the people who do this) to watch out for whoever did that "Marathon in Heels" map. Brooklyn is not separate from Long Island, nor is Queens—they are all on the SAME PIECE OF LAND. Whoever did the map apparently lives in a bizarre reality where Long Island is a separate landmass that resides below the isle of Manhattan.

I realize that you all must work very hard on the "Big Concept" and I am just being an anal-retentive dork, but whoever doesn't know this basic piece of geography and has a creative role in your magazine is in my eyes probably a major queef, or a European. It's especially bad since you guys always hang out with or talk about people who reside in Brooklyn. I mean if I had to make a goofy map of Mexico City for some reason, I would feel obliged to look at another map first before blindly guessing at what it must be shaped like. But I guess if all I knew about this city was, like, getting coked up at "scene" parties and taking cabs then maybe I wouldn't really have a good idea what the city I fucking lived in looked like either.

TERENCE MINERBROOK
Via email

Wow. How long were you smirking after hitting the send button on this little nugget of genius? Since we're guessing that the idea of glancing at an "actual" map of New York wasn't any more likely to occur to you after calling us out on our geography than before (or even just looking carefully at our map), we will simply spell it out for you: That is Staten Island, you fucking, fucking, fucking idiot.



CHEMICAL WAR NOT FAIR

Dear *Vice*,

Your issue about Iraq is really great. Outside of blogs, it's impossible to get comprehensive and personal information about the terrible situation in Iraq provided by the Iraqis themselves.

The pictures at the bottom of the article "Weapons of Mass Bewilderment" reminded me of a gruesome documentary I saw a while ago, *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*. It's about the use of white phosphorus (or WP) by US forces on Iraqi fighters and civilians in Fallujah in November 2004. WP is a chemical incendiary that can be used as a marking device, a smoke screen, or a weapon that melts skin. Watching the documentary again I noticed that one reporter interviewed even mentions its probable use at the Baghdad airport and the toxic dust that had to be cleaned up. The US State Department denied using WP as a weapon after this film was released, but later the Pentagon admitted to its use against entrenched combatants in Fallujah and other areas.

Basically white phosphorus will burn exposed skin, sometimes right down to the bone. It's like napalm but not illegal under UN regulations. In some cases WP can burn a whole body without even charring the victim's clothes. It looks like WP killed those people in the article and the descriptions of blinding explosions could have been of WP artillery shells exploding.

You can watch the whole documentary on YouTube. People need to know that the US military has and continues to use CHEMICAL FUCKING WEAPONS against Iraqis. General Peter Pace, current chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said about WP, "It is not a chemical weapon. It is an incendiary. And it is well within the law of war to use those weapons as they're being used, for marking and for screening." Please watch the documentary and decide for yourself.

DANIEL TEPPER
Boston, MA

You're probably trying to get a plug in for your friend's movie or something, but fuck it. It sounds interesting.

A RARE BREED

Dear *Vice*,

I was totally with you on your first nonthemed issue and was enjoying all the articles and everything—right up until the fashion section when I was forced by the presence of fucking GUY-ON-GUY PORN to throw the magazine on the floor where it remains, untouched, to this day. Need I even say What the fuck? It's one thing to have a bunch of chicks romping around with one another (as is Richard Kern's forte) or to throw a couple of guys into the mix, but who other than fags wants to be forced to stare at a pair of bony, white skaters fagging around in their underwear. Other fags, that's who. You guys probably think you're all being "ironic" and really "mind-fucking" your readership, but I hope you enjoy it when nobody straight ever touches your magazine again. Cause it's happening real soon.

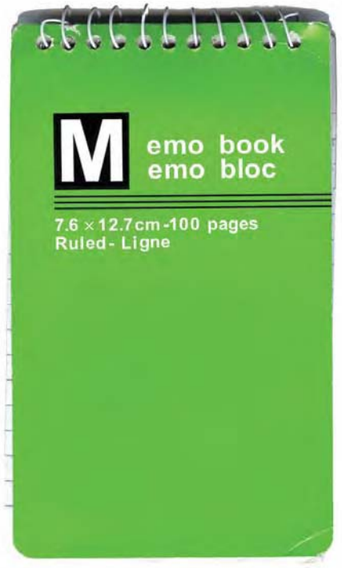
TROY A.
Cincinnati, OH

Wow, guys like you really exist? We always thought that homophobes were kind of a made-up thing that people only talked about in college classes, but one photo of two guys kissing upset you so bad that you chucked the magazine across the room and then wrote us a letter? You're crazy and we hope you get raped by a gang of gay-rape guys.

Send correspondence to vice@viceland.com
(include city and state/province) or to Vice Magazine,
97 North 10th Street, Suite 204, Brooklyn, NY 11211.
Letters are edited for length.

DAINTY MUFF WARMER

Sometimes a girl will get so lonely and sad she'll hook up with her gay friend and they'll have a buddy version of a mercy fuck. Then she'll send his penis this the next day as a thank-you.



EMO NOTEPAD

This is where you can write, "I'm feeling so scared/about all the lies you wrote to me./I wish I could fight back but there's nothing more to fight for./Nothing left but loneliness./Loneliness and pain./I wish I could hold you in the rain./In the rain."

CABBAGE-AND-CONDOM FLAVORED CHIPS

Sure, when your friends are acting all cool and saying shit like, "Salt and vinegar kicks ass," you're going to go, "Yeah." But wouldn't you rather be chewing on some used condom you found near a tree or a boiled cabbage you pulled out of the garbage? How about if both were combined and barbeque-flavored? Yeah, we thought so.

CREE REARVIEW-MIRROR THING

This was procured from an Indian reservation for $1 and it looks like it took all day to make. Um, can we get these guys some actual jobs please? Even prisoners get 21 cents an hour.

MEN PLUS KING POWER TEA

Methinks the Chinaman doth protest too much. Especially when he admits in brackets that this is just a new way to say "gay."

COSMIC BROWNIES

Do they not know that people put drugs in brownies and get really, really high or is this one of those things where the people at the snack company had that floating around in their subconscious and put it on the box without thinking where they got it from? In other words, is this a wink to us the way kids' movies have little jokes in there for adults or are the people at Little Debbie completely fucking retarded?

VICTIM-DISPOSAL BAGS

You know rape and murder is getting out of control when date-rape drugs make their own garbage bags.

OFFENSIVE TOURIST BRACELETS

If you want to be a modern artist but you don't have the time, just go to Cancun and have the guys who make those tacky tourist bracelets weave the most offensive things you can think of. Now come back to Manhattan, make up a bunch of complex jargon about globalization, and—bang—you're an art star.

CYLON GLASSES

We picked these up at Village de Valeurs in Montreal. The lights on the top scroll from right to left just like a Cylon's helmet. Not sure why they have the word "funny" on the top. They are so badass they're basically the tear tattoo of sunglasses.

Featured Product: The Ramondetta Shoe in Chocolate/Tan/Gum/Real, Ramondetta Denim, and Pale Death Fleece.
Go to www.c1rca.com to see more of Peter's action shot and his signature footwear and apparel.

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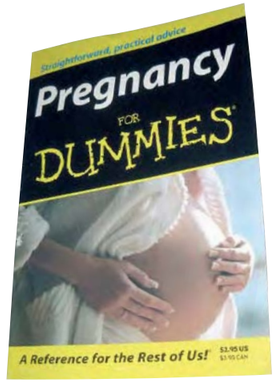
TIDBITS (A MONTHLY LOOK AT THE THINGS WE LOVE)

BUTT AID

If you want to tell your parents you have powder for a baby's ass but you're too scared, just say, "I have AIDS. Just kidding, my baby does. Just kidding, she only has one aid. Just kidding, she has Butt Aid." It's a good way to ease into the news.



PREGNANCY FOR DUMMIES

Wait, isn't that the problem in the first place? That pregnancy IS for dummies? Isn't that what *Idiocracy* was about?

Thanks to Jeff Patch of Redondo Beach, CA

BABY WHEELCHAIR

Babies can't walk. That's why people have strollers. So why does everyone get so freaked out when you put a baby in a wheelchair you bought off a website that sells accessories for giant dolls?

Get yours at mytwinn.com

THIS MONTH'S WINNER: PREGNANCY FOR DUMMIES

The guy who sent us this left his address as "Jeff Patch, Redondo Bch, CA." That's it! That's all he gave us. He's either really important or really stoned.

TO WIN YOUR FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO *VICE*, SEND TIDBITS TO:
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HEADS ARE GONNA ROLL FRIDAY MAY 18TH

THIS PAGE:
- CAMBODIAN PEDOBUSTERS
- HOLY PR
- PALFIGHTS

Fight your friend on pages 38, 40, and 42.

Meet the new Christ's press agent below.

Pretty tweens make graves on page 40.

STUFF LIKE THAT

"Every single day for us is a party. Because we know we're living in heaven, we enjoy every day like nobody else does."

Good Touch, Bad Touch

The adolescent Pol Pot learned detachment through initiation in the Buddhist philosophies of the Triple Jewel and the Eightfold Path. His understanding of emptiness allowed him to march the population of Phnom Penh out of the city and into the killing fields.

Pol Pot's slaughter of one in every five people created a weird demographic: 51 percent of the population of Cambodia is under 18 years old. Many of the kids don't believe that the Khmer Rouge's revolution even happened. Hostility between the generations cuts both ways: Middle-aged women with philandering husbands often hunt down the underage girls responsible for their shame and pour buckets of nitric acid over their heads.

In this callous context—the young indifferent to their elders' suffering, the old covetous of youth to the point of disfiguring it—Cambodia's vast urchin class has fallen prey to a sea of globetrotting pederasts. Jizz trotters.

A UK-based NGO, ChildSafe International, has enlisted taxi drivers and hotel workers as anti-sex-tourism vigilantes. As part of their campaign, these anti-diddlers hand out flyers and put up signs, including the anti-child-prostitution flow chart depicted here. Which, incidentally, doubles as a how-to guide.

HARVEY CHURCH

God's Publicist

Jesus is a busy guy—that's why he has a publicist. Axel Poessy is Dr. Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda the Man Christ Jesus's media director. She, like thousands of followers around the world, believes the 60-something former heroin addict living in Miami with a 666 tattoo on his arm is the second coming of Christ, and works to further the reach of his world government. We wanted to know what it was like having God as your boss, so we asked her.

Vice: How did you get the job? Was it a tough interview process?
Axel Poessy: Not at all. Remember, God is a man of purpose. If this was the function that he gave me, he was preparing me for it. There is no such thing as an interview process or job posting—that's not how his world government works.

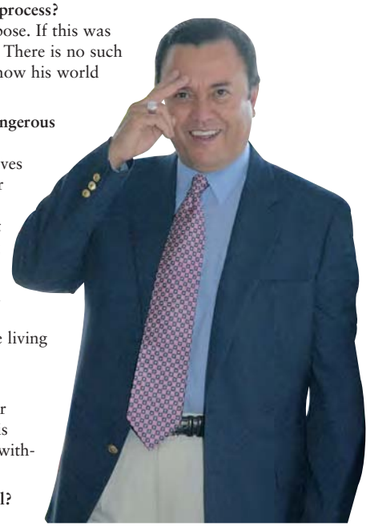
The Catholic Church claims the Man Christ Jesus is a dangerous man. What do you think about this?
Evidence shows that there are millions of people whose lives have been transformed by him. But it's not convenient for the Catholic Church—they will do anything in their power to bring him down. What they don't realize is that they're dealing with God in a man, and no one can bring him down. But they'll see that.

He wears neat sunglasses and seems like a snazzy dresser. Does he ever party?
Every single day for us is a party. Because we know we're living in heaven, we enjoy every day like nobody else does.

What does he think about Jews?
Jewish people are following a Jewish law that expired over 2,007 years ago. Since they kept teaching something that is expired, they have basically made us follow a Jewish law without us knowing it. They have Jewidized the whole world.

He teaches that opulence isn't a sin. Does he pay you well?
I don't get paid for this. I do it out of love.

ROCCO CASTORO



The Man Christ Jesus himself, photo courtesy of Growing in Grace Ministries.

A VICE STREET POLL: How Would You Kick Your Best Friend's Ass?

INTERVIEWS BY JOHN JAMES
PHOTOS BY ANTONIA WRIGHT

Ken Greenberg (left): I'd take my left elbow and I'd crack him across the jaw.

Troy Phipps (right): I would grab him by the shoulders and knee him in the balls.

Ken: Then I'd turn and put all my weight on my right foot and I would crack him in the knee with the flat of my foot. By this point he's going to be on the ground, so I would go over and give him a heel to the jaw a bunch of times. He's all done.

Mithun Padhyay (left): Right away I'd kick him in the nuts.

Vineet Sawant (right): I'd go for the eye-jab with my thumbs, and then when he's bent over I'd give him a hard shot in the nose.

Mithun: At that point I'd drop-kick him, right in the chest, dead center, right on the chest bone.

Vineet: I'd pick up the closest chair or whatever I can grab, and I would smash it on his head.

Jeff Sorrea (left): My first move is gonna be a hook punch to his right eye.

Jared Gonzalez (right): I'm gonna hit him with a right, most likely to his nose.

PRESENTING THE ETNIES/STEREO JET SET COLLABORATION SHOES BY JASON LEE & CHRIS PASTRAS... LEARN MORE AT WWW.ETNIES.COM...

THIS PAGE:
- FUCK THE A.M.
- MOZ ROBBERS

"This old gay dangled his bits over the ledge of the hot tub and talked about mayonnaise."

Illustration by J Penry

I Hate Mornings—Waking Up Is Sucky

I haven't woken up before noon in the six years since I graduated high school, so when I got the assignment to wake up at 6 AM for a week and write about it I was horrified. My friends were like, "Big whup: Eat breakfast and read the paper for a week." You don't understand! I hate mornings so much.

MONDAY—At 5:57 AM, my feet hit the floor. I actually had a plane to catch, which made it easier. My mom drove me to the airport and the whole ride there, the only thing that my brain could register was "SHUT THE FUCK UP, MOM!" And I like my mom! That's how cranky I am at 6 AM.

TUESDAY—5:45 AM. I was so pissed off when I heard my alarm clock going off that I put in my copy of *Pleasure Beach* and whacked off right away. Today is my big day of posing like a businessman. I wore my one good suit and carried a busted briefcase from Goodwill. I got a latte and got on the subway. I told myself, "I am a successful businessman." But I was farty and tired, and my suit was wrinkled. Once I got downtown, I was totally despondent and went to McDonald's for a couple McGriddles.

WEDNESDAY—5:50 AM, up and at 'em. Since the business world chewed me up and spit me out, I played stay-at-home mom, starting my day off with the *Playgirl Morning Workout*. After ten grueling minutes I was beat, so I moved on to chores. Some of the items I encountered while cleaning: a dentist bill for $800 (for one visit!), Macaulay Culkin magazine clippings, scabies-lotion information, and a crumpled diary entry that says, "Zit pills make me sick every day. They're eating my stomach."

THURSDAY—I totally cheated today! I slept in till 9 AM. Look, I'm sorry. I was up until 4 AM last night driving around with a cute guy, listening to Tupac, and getting stoned. We did some karaoke and I think my exhaustion really hit when I was singing "God Only Knows." I shed a tear! An actual tear. I *cried*.

FRIDAY—5:30 AM. You know how working folks sometimes go to the gym BEFORE they have to go to work? I signed up for the YMCA. I went straight for the hot tub. This old gay dangled his bits over the ledge of the hot tub and talked about mayonnaise. ("I didn't realize the eggs had been sitting around that long.") I'd normally be into letting him go on about food poisoning, but it was so early and I was so weak. I promptly got out and got dressed.

CONCLUSION—You know what? I'm so sad today that I cried! I feel like I finally understand TGIF, and the fact that I just wrote that makes me wanna barf. Tonight I'm gonna stay up all night watching *Cyber Seduction* on Lifetime and YouTubing old New Edition videos. Fuck you, mornings.

SETH BOGART

The Smiths Are Dead

Oh look, the Delia's catalog is selling Smiths baby tees now. There it is, right there between those Hello Kitty and *Saved by the Bell* t-shirts: The official death knell for the band that singlehandedly made me not totally kill myself in high school. Thanks Ben Cho, Patrick O'Dell, Ryan McGinley, and everyone else we know who wouldn't shut up about the Smiths. You made a band that was supposed to be the sole property of depressed misfits into a teenybopper's "retro" accessory basically. Now don't get me wrong, I love the Delia's catalog—it's a perennial JO fave, and my girlfriend says that even chicks in their 20s and 30s love the teen-targeted clothes and it's pretty hip or whatever. But, it's just… Can we please not fucking ruin things? Now every time I hear the Smiths I'll think of some gawky, zitty tween girl with braces getting her period for the first time. Although I guess maybe that's what the Smiths were sort of about in the first place, so perhaps we've just come full circle. Hmm...

DOOGIE BUELLER

A VICE STREET POLL: How Would You Kick Your Best Friend's Ass?

Jeff: Now I'm reaching for a stool, a bottle, whatever's close. If I'm gonna grab a bottle, I'm gonna break it right on his shoulder. I'm not trying to kill him, but I'm trying to get him down. And after he's on the floor, I'm going for body shots, and I'm gonna keep punching and stomping until it's all done.

Asi Mazar (left): We'll push each other for a minute, but then I'm going to go grab a bottle and smash it in his face.

Hezi Ambar (right): I'd punch him right in the nose, with my right, a straight right.

Asi: He might floor me with that, but I'm going to get up off the floor, and I'm going to pick up a chair, and I'm giving him everything I've got. There's nothing left after that.

Dwight Thomas (right): I've got a strong right so I'd start by giving him a punch in the eye.

John Thornton (left): I'm gonna rush him. I'll grab him, and I'm gonna give him a right to the ribs. Then he's gonna try and hit me back and I'm gonna block it, and then I'll punch him in his left side.

Dwight: I'd punch him in his left eye, and then once both eyes are swollen, he can't see me anymore. I'm a dirty fighter, so I'll pick up boxes, a brick, whatever, and throw them at him, smash them on him.

John: Now I'm going to grab him by the back of the head and I'll uppercut-knee him to the ribs and then to the mouth. Then I'm grabbing a pipe and I'm hittin' him in the knees, and that's gonna be it. That's all she wrote.

Please don't do that thing where you think we're someone else and then try to pull our faces off. Please.

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THIS PAGE:
- HORROR PITCHURS

"Eventually I got a bow and arrow and shot my brother in the eye."

Dark Doodles: Drawing With Faris

Faris Badwan's most formative experience happened at the age of two, shortly after his mother clambered into a hot-air balloon. Unfamiliar with what usually happens when people get into hot-air balloons, he was horrified when she waved to him and then started rising slowly into the air. His panic and terror increased when his father told him that his mother was never, ever coming back.

She came back, of course, but from that day forward, little Faris began filling books with dark, weird illustrations of people hacking off limbs, monsters eating people, and caves filled with skulls.

Now age 20 and singing in London's Addams-Family-meets-the-Cramps band of preference the Horrors, the half-Palestinian Faris has continued his hobby and fills up a new sketchbook every two weeks or so. He was drawing away while I was having dinner with him the other night and he showed me what he'd done. I was like: "Wow, that's amazing. We should put it in the magazine."

Vice: What were your first books like?
Faris: The first one is mainly of dinosaurs and extremely muscular knights. I went through a long human grandeur phase. When I was seven, I drew a "sex scene." I remember it perfectly: I drew a man with a mustache and a blonde woman. Each panel showed them in progressing states of undress. The final drawing was them hugging in their underwear. I was ashamed and destroyed the picture.

So what did the knights develop into over time?
They became soldiers. Anything fighting-related, really. Then it was robots and cowboys.

What is it with the fighting?
I don't know. I never had toy guns or swords when I was a kid. Every year I would write "toy shotgun" on my Christmas list and be baffled by its omission from my sack. Eventually I got a bow and arrow and shot my brother in the eye.

So what are all these new drawings about?
Animals like birds of prey, bats, cats, rats, and wolves. I need to find some free sketchbooks though. The Moleskine books I use are a tenner each. Sometimes I steal one and buy one on the same day to redress the balance. Can you ask them to send me some for free?

MANDY COPPER

A VICE STREET POLL: How Would You Kick Your Best Friend's Ass?

David Velez (right): He's bigger than me, so I'd throw the first punch as quickly as I can, right in the mouth, right away, to knock him down.

Rolando Lineros (left): I'd kick him right in the knees, and then once he's down, kick him in the stomach.

David: If he's kicking me really badly, and I think he can hurt me, I am going to kick him in the nuts and then get some space so I can land another punch.

Rolando: A nutshot would do it.

David: I've done some martial arts, so I'm trying to land a punch with a fully extended arm. I'd punch him with a drill motion, right in the nose. If I landed that punch it would knock him right out.

Brooke LaValley (left): She's smaller than me so I'd just shove her right over. Plus I got my black belt when I was 16. It's not really a fair fight.

Tara Swenson (right): I guess I could grab her hair and try to smash a bottle over her head. Then I could jump on a table and do a roundhouse kick or whatever it's called.

Brooke: *Pfft*, I'd just duck and sweep your leg out from under you and make you land in the broken glass.

Tara: You're right. In truth, I'd probably just run away if you tried to fight me.

Brooke: I'd chase you down and do a "rattlesnake razorblade" on you.

Tara: I would definitely not win this fight. Could we, like, have a dance battle instead?

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Chad Muska's Skytop
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I'M POSSESSED

Help Me

Suliman Cassimjee is a South African man who lives in Sweden. In the 1970s, he met Lisa Anstrin and Kjell Westphal through a rehab program run by the Church of Scientology, and then sometime in the mid-80s, they began attacking him with their minds.

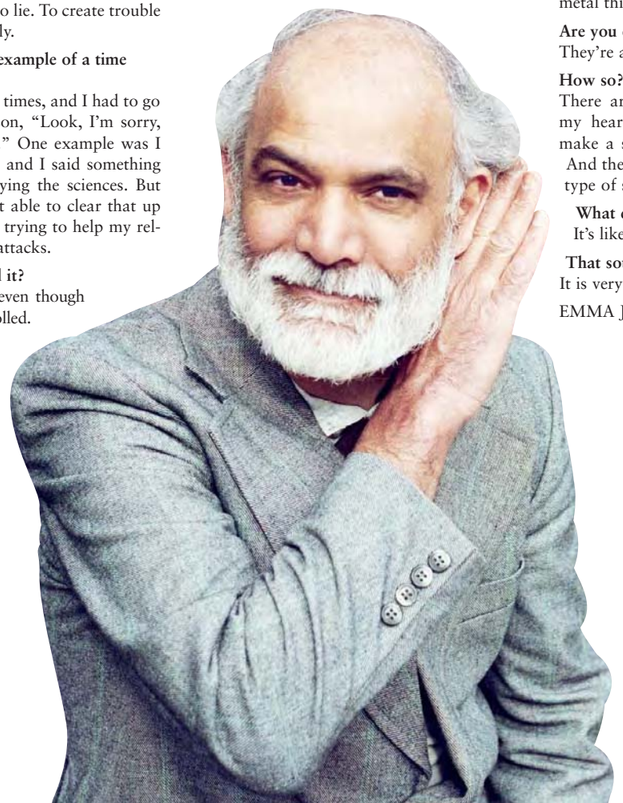
Vice: What were the first attacks?
Suliman Cassimjee: I had been working with Lisa and her husband, and there was some kind of dispute. I made a very friendly offer, but I was met with an attack on my mind. It was more like a mental-health attack. I was caused to experience more worry than I'm supposed to have experienced.

And the physical attacks?
Yes, there are lots and lots of little things one doesn't normally notice. For example, a person can be controlled to lie. To create trouble among friends or family.

Do you remember an example of a time when that happened?
Yes. It happened a few times, and I had to go back and tell the person, "Look, I'm sorry, I'm getting controlled." One example was I went to see a relative, and I said something about how I am studying the sciences. But I'm not really. I wasn't able to clear that up immediately. I've been trying to help my relatives understand the attacks.

They don't understand it?
No, it's very difficult, even though my mother was controlled. Her jaw was controlled to move up and down at times. She didn't know what was controlling her. She thought it was just an illness.

Almost all my crockery was attacked to break, so I have no cups.



Can you tell me about a recent attack?
These two are attacking me in the building. They caused the floor mat to age and to get ruined in a very short space of time. I was reaching for some tumblers to place into a container for the tumblers to be washed, but my hand was moved in another direction and knocked the tumbler to fall and break. Almost all my crockery was attacked to break, so I have no cups. I have one tumbler, one little plate… I have had to buy some metal things.

Are you experiencing attacks right now?
They're attacking my hearing.

How so?
There are certain sounds being created in my hearing. They threaten that they will make a sound to make the children suffer. And these two are threatening me with this type of sound.

What does it sound like?
It's like a child suffering.

That sounds very difficult.
It is very difficult.

EMMA JACOB

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Video still by Beagle. This is it: the absolute greatest "stoops" usage of all time. Neck Face has brought stoops to the pinnacle of its existence and now no one can use it anymore. It's done.

ENOUGH ALREADY!

Whatevs, Slang Is Totes Stoops In Charge

When the *New York Times* ran a whimsical article by a mom who was befuddled by her teenage daughter's constant abbreviation of words, we got nervous. But when we saw *New York* magazine or some other shit rag like that (we forget which one, honestly) use the word "stoops" in their film reviews, we knew it was over. Then when we saw a Volkswagen commercial that called their new car the "V-Dub," we knew it was over, nuked, burnt, ruined, and had AIDS.

Slang just isn't cute anymore. It makes us feel like how we feel when our moms say "awesome." Moms shouldn't say "awesome." Moms should say, "That's nice, dear." In fact, everyone should say, "That's nice, dear." It's a pleasant thing to say and to hear. So take all your "gnarls" and your "probs" and lay them gently to rest next to "as if" and "NOT!" They are now part of slang history. PS: We are allowed to call a moratorium on these words and phrases because we broke them in the media. Either us or one of our friends started all this stoopsy, gnarlsy, in charge-y, totes-y shit. So, you're welcome. And we're sorry. Both, at the same time.

We are especially sick of abbreviations. You know what abbreviations are? LAZINESS. And laziness leads to forgetfulness, which leads to idiocy, and idiots are the only people who abbreviate words. It's like a snake eating its own tail and then puking it up and eating the puke. Just learn how to spell "definitely." It's not that hard after the 20th time.

So, to be clear, here's what's out: whatevs, 'tevs, gnarls, defs, probs, stoops, totes. Adding "-wise," "status," "much?" or "in charge" to the ends of words. Calling things "tight." Or "sick." "Redonks" or "ridics." Any variation of the word "delicious" and anything you ripped off from Epicly Later'd. We're sad to say that "riffing" has to go too. Although let's say something happens where a joke is passed on from friend to friend and you call it a "riffle effect"—that's clever. Clever is good. We encourage creativity with language. Puns are still OK. Making up your own in-joke words with your friends is great—using other people's is lame.

Here's what's still acceptable: Spelling words phonetically for comedy's sake can be used in moderation. "Sowwie" is good because it conveys a cuteness that a simple "sorry" cannot. "Kewl" is enjoying a resurgence, and we're OK with that. "Noice" is one that isn't annoying yet (wait… NOW it is), and for some reason we think spelling words like we're Scottish is hilarious. It cannae get old.

Acronyms like BTW and WTF are useful in writing but should never, ever be uttered aloud.

And finally, "douche chills" has become an indispensable phrase. We can't let it go because there's nothing else like it. What are you going to say instead, "Boy, that naked hula-hoop guy sure is… gross"? Just doesn't have the same zing. So douche chills stays. But that's it.

VICE STAFF

PSYCHIC TOWN, USA

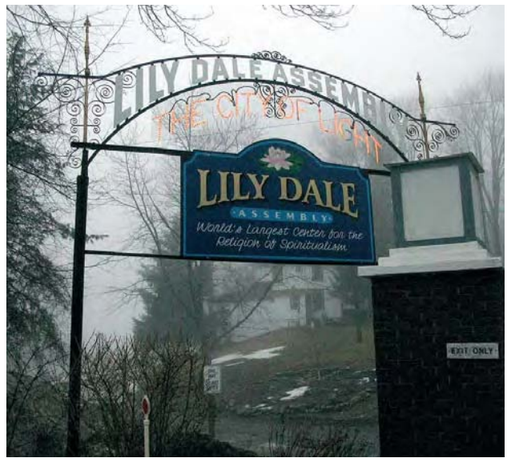
Lily Dale Has an Energy Vortex

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY BILLY MILLER

Oh hello, it's a town populated with nothing but self-proclaimed psychics. In northwestern New York, situated near a small lake, lies Lily Dale, the birthplace of "Modern Spiritualism," aka the belief that we are able to communicate with the dead. Most everyone who lives in the town works as a medium or in some sort of psychic capacity. During the summer, throngs of "normies" descend upon Lily Dale seeking whatever it is that people who go to psychics are seeking. Solace and stuff, I guess. If you've ever watched John "Biggest Douche in the Universe" Edward on his show *Crossing Over*, you've got a general idea of the way these guys talk—although Lily Dale residents look down on television psychics, tarot readers, and astrologers as "entertainers." Ew, we hate entertainers too!

The town got its psychic fame in 1848 when resident sisters Margaret, Leah, and Kate Fox claimed to have heard "tappings" from beyond the grave. Word of the miraculous events spread, and they began to give public demonstrations of their ability to communicate with dead guys and gals. In an early example of rock-star-style crash and burn, the girls became internationally famous and then took a sharp left into Alcoholic Dale. They died penniless, shunned, and nearly forgotten and were buried in paupers' graves. Soon afterward, though, hundreds and then thousands began to profess similar powers of divination. From these humble beginnings the modern role of a "medium" evolved, and a new religion was founded. Get it? These three modest, drunk sisters invented the whole idea of the medium. They were like the oracles of yore, only in gingham dresses.

Spiritualism is roughly based on a Protestant Christian model—except Jesus is understood not as the son of God, but rather as a supreme avatar and guide. Though more open-minded in most ways than virtually any other religious group (lots of homer-sexuals are active in the scene), the people of Lily Dale are nonetheless very concerned about being portrayed as kooks. They are happy to talk about their beliefs and history but tend to clam up at any mention of "the press." Despite this, I decided to see what I could discover over a single weekend during the off-season. I got a personal reading and a guided tour of the town's library and museum. I went to a church service that involved displays of clairvoyance and mediumship from members of the congregation. Everyone was very nice, but I still don't know where my Grandpa Gernt hid the map to all that damn Nazi gold.
BILLY MILLER



Welcome to Lily Dale, the Mecca of Modern Spiritualism.

We were there in the off-season so it was pretty deserted. During the summer, they have about 500 residents and over 20,000 visitors who come to consult mediums and healers and to witness public displays of clairvoyance. We went around ringing some doorbells but no one answered.

The Fox sisters, who started it all.

This is Marilyn, an organist at one of the town's two churches. It looks like a Christian church but there's no Christian symbolism in it at all. During the service, a medium got up and told someone, "I see a man in dark gray standing behind you. He says you're going to sell your house in two months."

A "spirit horn" used to focus and amplify otherworldly communication. Basically, a paranormal hearing aid. The guy who showed us this told us that a coffee cup exploded in his hand the other day because his psychic energy was so intense.

Licensed medium Pauline Kay. I got a reading from her for $40. Everything she told me was very one-size-fits-all. Things like, "I can tell that you've had a lot of adversity in your life, but you've managed to overcome it." I wasn't so impressed by her psychic skills, but she was really sweet.

THE JAMAICAN SURF TEAM

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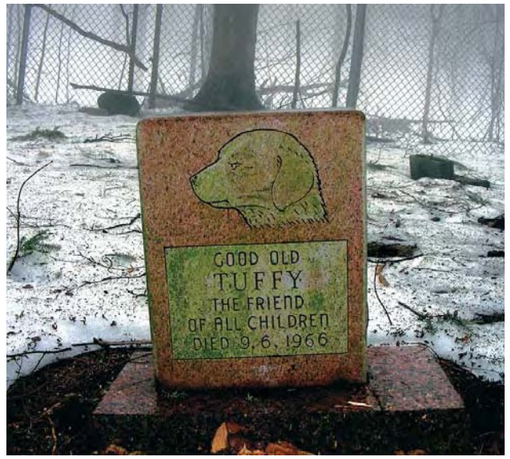
ICAH WILMOT, ISHAC K WILMOT, JOEL LAWRENCE, GABRE BECKFORD,
INI WILMOT, IMANI WILMOT, BILLY WILMOT IN CHAIR, AND IVAH WILMOT.

insight

An example of Lily Dale's many "precipitated paintings," which allegedly painted themselves without human intervention. Apparently, the "experts" were mystified and couldn't determine how they were composed, finally settling on butterfly wings as the closest material they could have been made with.

Leolyn Woods is a nearby stand of old-growth trees which is said to contain a psychic "energy vortex." I think they just mean that it's really pretty.

In the forest, there is a pet cemetery and something called "Inspiration Stump," which is a tree stump in the center of the vortex where many séances are held. There is something about the spot—it really does have a feeling to it! Or at least it just seemed really creepy that day, with all the fog and tall trees and little gravestones.



Some of the pets were said to be psychic too. Cute.

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ALCOHOL,
VIOLENCE,
OR INSANITY
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BUT THEY'VE ALWAYS
WORKED FOR ME.
– Hunter S. Thompson

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Ground Zero: *For months, everybody in New York breathed tiny particles of burnt and pulverized building, windows, furniture, insulation, people, office materials, jet fuel, asbestos, and dioxin.*

TOXICITIES

We're All Fucked!

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY VICE STAFF

You don't need to live in the smog-, garbage-, and disease-choked third world to be in the firing line of man-made disaster. In fact, it doesn't seem to be a matter of IF you will get a disease from breathing the air where you live. It's a matter of WHEN. Unless you're in a cabin deep in the Yukon chopping wood and reading this on the internet on a computer you made yourself out of ferns and berries, you are almost definitely going to die because of pollution (and it is going to hurt, too).

We asked each of our Vice *magazine editors around the world to find the most pollution-spewing sites in their home city and send us a little toxic postcard. The results make Al Gore sound like Doris Day.*

Come along with us…

MILAN

FIAMMA ABRASIVI FACTORY

Welcome to Milan, home of the Fiamma Abrasivi factory, which regularly releases clouds of lovely naphthalene into the air. Aldo Bonora, the head of a local branch of Italy's largest environmental NGO, explained that there is no scientific proof that naphthalene is carcinogenic when inhaled.

But then he also said that children at the school located down the street from Fiamma vomit if they play in the schoolyard for too long. And of the 90 people living in the building above the factory, 30 have cancer. How about them odds?

Liliana Di Marzo is one of them. She said, "Nothing will grow in my flowerpots. They blast naphthalene at night, when we're asleep."

The Sisas Factory and Chemical Dump: *After shutting its doors, the Sisas factory boxed and buried three mountains of waste above Milan's water supply. As water is pulled out of the substratum, the vacuum pulls the waste deeper into the soil, closer to the water. Tick-tock.*

Petrarca Neighborhood: *Think African squatters, rotting, open-air bedrooms, illegal dumps, and toxic stand-water pools.*

Asbestos Student Center: *In West Milan, a wide red-brick building entirely laminated in asbestos used to serve as a student center. It's in the background there. It's closed now, but 100 yards from it, there's a kids' park with swings and slides.*

Grazie. Ciao, bella! Now, what say we take a little jaunt on over to Brussels?

BRUSSELS/ANTWERP

THE CHURCH OF ST. JACOB, ANTWERP

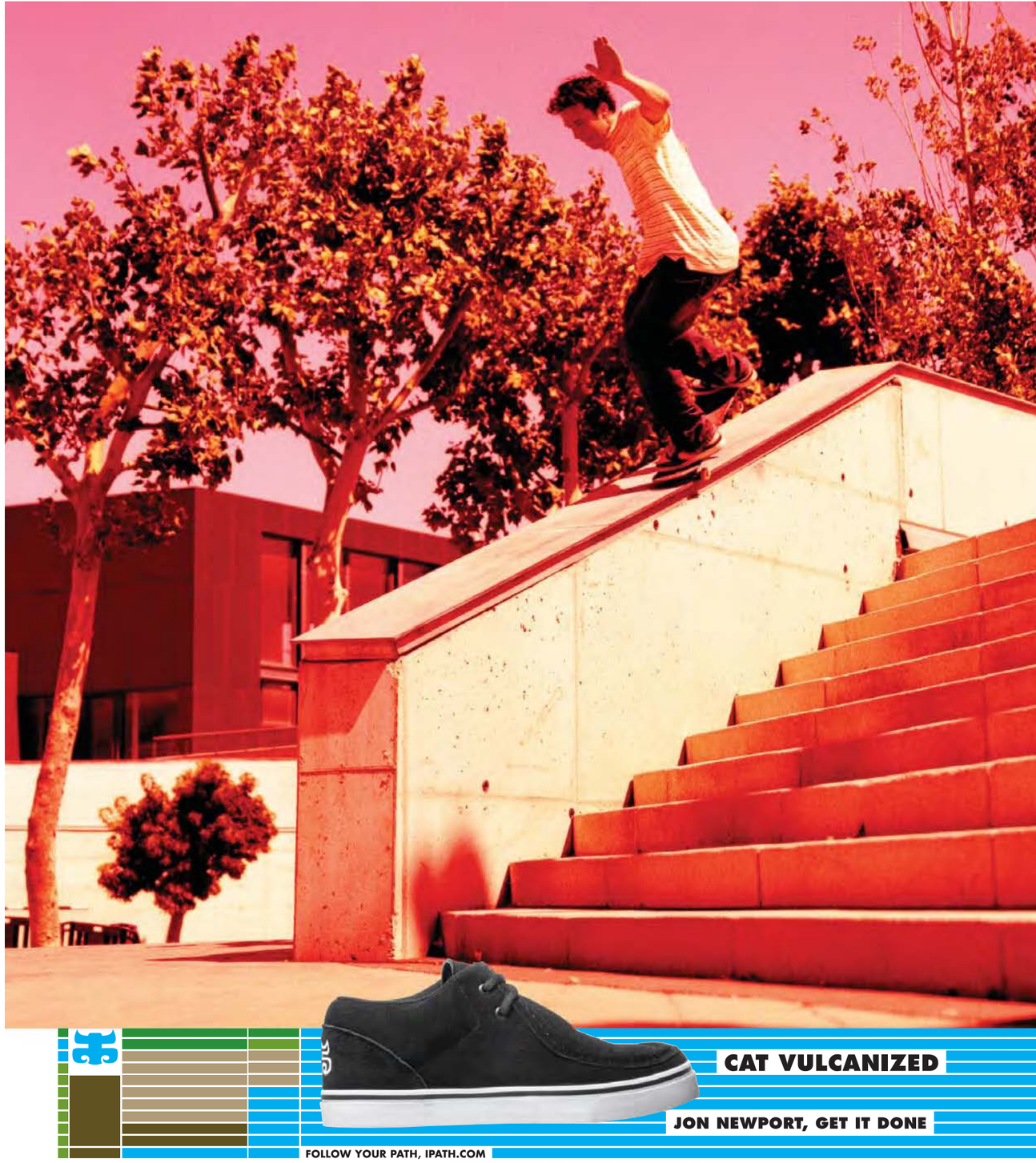
Brussels's Church of St. Jacob is best known as the place where Peter Paul Rubens is buried. Lesser known are the 14 square meters of illegally installed, radioactive lightning conductors on St. Jacob's roof. The measured value of radium 226 in the church is approximately 1,000 times the legal amount—enough to set the alarm off at a nuclear-power plant. Erik Verbeeck, an engineer campaigning to ban radioactive lightning conductors, told us, "If you were to take some sugar, carefully wipe it across the roof, and then drop the sugar in someone's coffee... You know what happened to that Russian guy in London, right?"

The Zenne, Brussels: *The Zenne enters Brussels an attractive river and leaves it a biologically dead garbage chute. It's underground in this picture.*

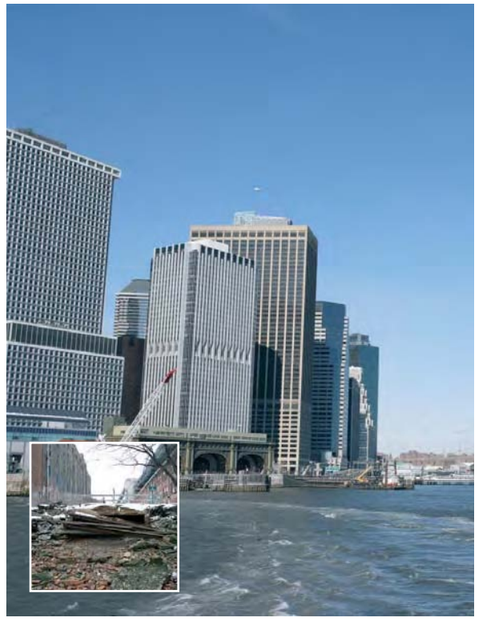
Military Hospital, Antwerp: *Cleaning products used in the now-closed hospital's laundry have filtered into the groundwater, making this the military's No. 1 most polluted wasteland.*

Cokeries du Marly, Brussels: *A few years ago, a fire broke out in one of the factory's towers and spewed benzene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons into the air for a week. You could smell it 110 miles away.*

Dang. Well, let's head for the Big Apple to take a dip in the Atlantic.



NEW YORK



COMBINED SEWAGE OVERFLOW SITES

New York City has a very old "combined usage" sewer system. That means that rainwater from city streets and buildings goes through the same pipes as sewage, so when it rains a lot and the system is overloaded, the pipes spew human and animal shit, trash, and loads of heavy metals and toxic chemicals into the waterways. THE FUCKING WATERWAYS. That's why beaches are closed after it rains—to prevent swimmers from swallowing mouthfuls of fecal bacteria.

OK, fine, we won't swim, but somebody should tell those guys who are fishing in the East River every day, right? Samara Swanston helped assemble the EPA's study of "subsistence fishermen" in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. She said, "A lot of people eat everything they catch. For most local waters, you are not supposed to eat more than one fish meal a month. Women of child-bearing age or children 16 or younger shouldn't eat it at all." So what happens if they do? They get really sick and then if they keep doing it, they die.

Ferries: *They emit 100 times more cancer-causing stuff and 1,000 times more smog per passenger-mile than SUVs.*

Harlem Bus Depot Asthma Cluster: *One in four people living near the 126th Street bus depot has asthma.*

High-Impact Zones: *Migratory birds fly into New York's glass buildings and die.*

Ouch! I think I'm ready to go Japanese! They are smart enough to not shit where they eat, right?

TOKYO

DEMONIC TRASH-BIRDS

Sixteen thousand feral Japanese ravens feast each morning on the rubbish left in plastic bags on Tokyo's sidewalks and alleys. Once they are full of trash, they attack grown men and leave lampposts all the way down Shibuya's main drag encrusted in shit. So yes, they are terrifying and their shit is full of bacteria—but how do they taste?

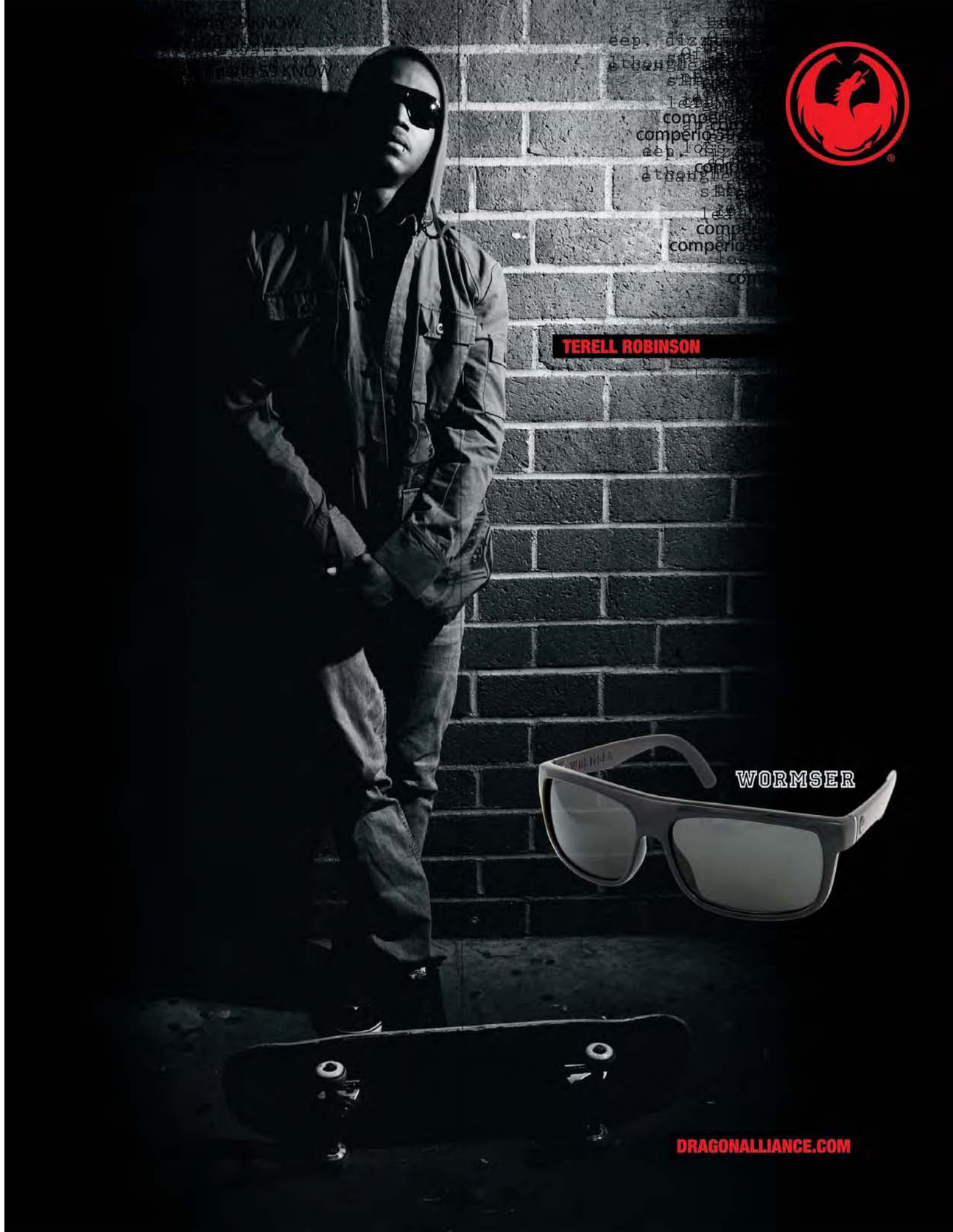
After feasting on blackbird stir-fried with pepper, fried blackbird, and blackbird pie, the governor of Tokyo said: "If there are too many blackbirds, we should eat them. Blackbird-meat pie tastes good. We should make it a Tokyo specialty."

Suginami Disease: *Suginami Waste Station processes 100 tons of waste daily. Suginami Disease is what the residents around the facility have. Symptoms include coughing, dullness of arms and legs, and headaches.*

Dioxin in Toshima, Tokyo Bay: *The bottom layers of Tokyo Bay are contaminated with various toxins including mercury and dioxin. Mercury freaks Japanese people out because Nippon is home to a type of mercury poisoning called Minamata Disease. Symptoms include vertigo and psychosis.*

Tsukiji Market: *The Central Wholesale Fish Market is being relocated to Toyosu, the former site of Tokyo Gas. The soil in the future site has shown high concentrations of lead, arsenic, chromium hexavalent, cyanogens, mercury, and benzene.*

GROSS! OK, let's keep going. Who's next? Amsterdam?



AMSTERDAM

HEMWEGCENTRALE

People in Amsterdam are very concerned about buildings that block their view ("horizon pollution," they call it). However, they don't often worry about the 176-foot-tall, continually smoking exhaust pipe of the Hemwegcentrale factory. Every year it releases 4.2 million tons of carbon dioxide, 4,000 tons of nitrogen oxide, and over 40 micrograms of some fucked-up particle matter that causes lung disease. And the water that cools the ever-burning toxic flames is dumped warm into the North Sea Canal, killing everything in the vicinity.

This is Amsterdam, so if there is a factory releasing cancer into the air and death into the water, there will be a community of broken bohemians squatting in its shadow and calling it Hedonia. The people of Hedonia live in shacks, eat garbage, and bathe in wastewater. One of the inhabitants, Ardje, told *Vice*, "You can't drink the water, but it's nice and warm!"

Oostergasfabriek: *The former site of a gas plant is now home to a suburb and a pet asylum. The residents complain of nausea and respiratory diseases. The pooches complain that they're in an asylum.*

D'Oude Raai: *People who live near this company's cell-phone antennae have blamed them for persistent coughs, nausea, chronic fatigue, and cancer.*

Houthaven: *The site of 300 years of unmonitored industrial construction, this harbor is so polluted that you can get fined for digging into the ground a meter deep and throwing the earth in the air.*

That's nice, Ardje, you fucking retarded Dutch squatter hippie. Get your bath there. Nice and clean. All sparklin'. We're going to gay Paree.

PARIS

TOUR MONTPARNASSE

The Tour Montparnasse is the second-tallest building in Paris. It's filled with offices, stores, tourists, restaurants, and asbestos. Serge Jullineau, president of the Agence des Risques de la Santé, says, "Cancers related to asbestos are hard to trace, so it's hard to convince 5,000 people to clear out of the building."

A Montparnasse security guard pointed to the ceiling and said, "It's everywhere. But I've been here for 25 years, and it's never been a problem." Some computer engineers said they hadn't been aware of the asbestos in the building, but they didn't really care. We told them it only takes ONE asbestos fiber piercing your throat to get cancer. Just one! A bartender overheard and said, "Bof, there's been asbestos in this place for at least 40 years."

Lead paint in la Goutte d'Or: *Thirty percent of all Paris's lead-poisoning cases come from 200 lead-paint-slathered buildings in the Goutte d'Or. This is one of them.*

The Seine: *Paris's water-purification plant dumped 80,000 cubic meters of untreated water (sewage) a day into the Seine for a month last year. They wanted to do it for six months, but the Green Party convinced them to take it easy.*

Air: *Get up into some tall building and look down. You can see the smog from above. It's a pretty shade of orange, like LA's.*

Sacre bleu! "People still live here, so I guess there's no problem"? We're going down under, where the water is blue and the accents are… tolerable.

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–Johnny Knoxville
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VICE

MELBOURNE

COODE ISLAND

G'day mate. Welcome to Coode Island, just four kilometers from Melbourne's city center. The island was created in 1886 as a sanatorium for people with bubonic plague. Today, it's Victoria's major petrochemical-storage facility as well as the main import and export point for hazardous materials used in industry.

With the nearest residential area only 500 meters away, we're just crossing our fingers we don't see any more mistakes like the one we had in 1991, when an employee left the cap off one of the tanks of waste, lightning struck, and 8.5 million liters of chemicals went up in flames, producing a massive toxic cloud over the city! Doesn't that sound made up? It's totally true!

Clenaway Landfill: *This site has been used as the main dumping ground for toxic waste from major industries in Victoria since 1973. People living in houses across the road have complained of health disorders including cancer, miscarriages, and multiple sclerosis.*

Lonsdale Power Plant: *After almost 100 years of operation, the Lonsdale power plant closed in 1982, leaving behind asbestos, diesel particles, and a rent-free home with electricity and running water for Melbourne's squatters.*

Yarra River: *Like the chief body of water in any thriving metropolis: an* E. coli*-laden soup.*

Meh. Call us when you have AIDS. In the meantime, we're going to take a quick jaunt through the hellhole known as London.

LONDON

KENSINGTON OLYMPIA TRAINS STATION

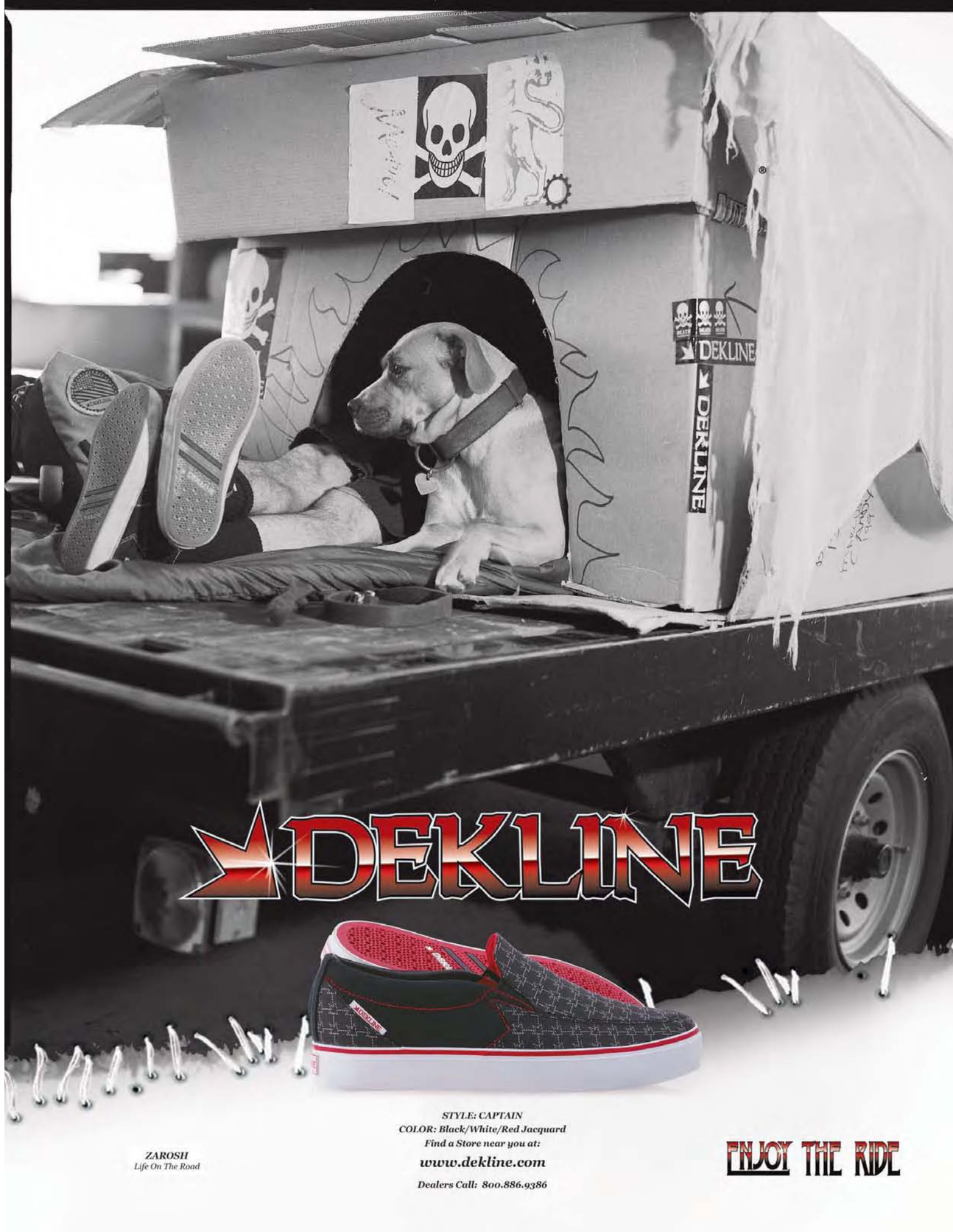
Every week, highly toxic waste is transported through London's commuter-rail stations, along the North London and Gospel Oak lines to the Sellafield nuclear site. We'd tell you to mind the irradiated rods, but train times are kept secret, so it's impossible to know when a toxic train is coming through. Environmental activist Fabrizzio Ardani explained to us that small amounts of contaminated water can pass through the containing flasks, drip onto the ground, and slowly poison the soil of residential areas near the station. Bottoms up, London!

Clapton Square, Hackney: *In this unofficial city dumping ground, you'll find all sorts of domestic waste. Sofas, fridges, broken chairs, beer cans, condoms, and sanitary towels. It's like the rear end of England's middle class splayed out before you. Nice.*

The River Thames: *Thanks to London's Victorian sewer system, untreated sewage is released into the capital's river every week.*

Olympic Village, East London: *The 450 residents of the Clays Lane Estate are being vacated to make way for the Olympic Village. Clays Lane inhabitants have uncovered information suggesting that radioactive waste was dumped on land next to their estate in 1959. (This is part of their case for why residential homes should stay?)*

Well, bugger all. London is fucked too (as if we couldn't guess). How about their cold, cold neighbors to the north in Sweden?



STOCKHOLM

RINKEBY

Nobody is overweight in Stockholm, except the kids of a town named Rinkeby, where 18.7 percent of them are lardballs. Monika Dosai works in the health service and spends her days trying to convince Rinkeby parents to make their kids walk instead of riding in strollers. But why do fat six-year-olds ride in strollers? Monika: "To get out of Rinkeby, you need to get on the commuter train, and to get to the train you need to take the bus. And the buses are free for everyone with a kid in a stroller."

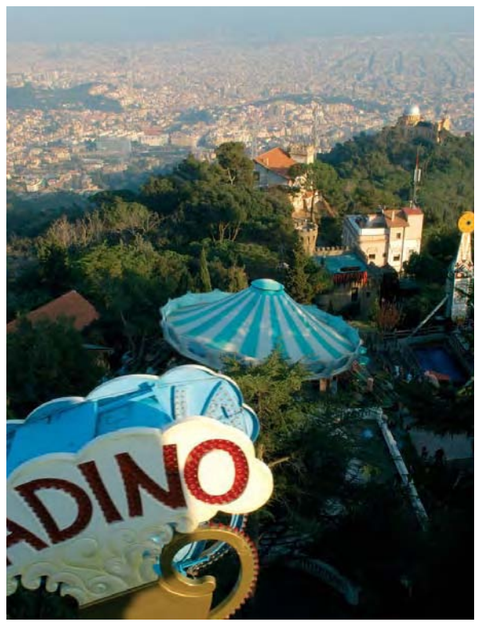
Thunbergsgatan Walkup: *A building run by "Worst Landlord of the Year" three years running. The windows are broken, the electrical cords have not been replaced for 60 years, the insulation is rotting. Tenants complain of daily electrical shocks and injuries from the collapsing façade.*

Årsta Bay: *The Årsta Bay is a popular swimming hole and soup of bacteria and chemical waste. According to biologist Anders Stehn, "The colon-bacteria count is so high, there's really no use in measuring the chemicals. They all get drowned out. And anyway, you're not supposed to go in the water."*

The Stockholm Sluice: *The Stockholm Sluice is the pride of the 1930s slide-rule generation. It was the first escalator built in Sweden and hasn't been restored since. From a height of about 1,000 feet it looks great. Up close, it's a nightmarish labyrinth of ancient eroded concrete, rebar, and bleeding rust.*

Wait, that isn't so bad. Let's leave Sweden on the list of possible places to wait out the apocalypse. But just in case, let's take a gander at Spain.

BARCELONA



COLLSEROLA WOODS, TIBIDABO

The Tibidabo is the highest peak of the Collserola Sierra Mountains and is surrounded by an enormous green belt that acts as the lungs of Barcelona. However, a strange relationship between the natural lands and the tourist area has evolved, as luxury hotels and amusement parks press at the Tibidabo's protected borders. The most visible symptoms of the unnatural proximity between city and nature are the packs of wild dogs abandoned by their owners in the mountain area. They have become angry and territorial, endangering not only the few native species left in Tibidabo but also those tourists who decide to go for a stroll in the woods. Recently a pack of wild terriers attacked some kids in a park. May we go blind if we are lying.

Sant Adrià Depurating Plant, Coastline: *This dreary industrial landscape boasts a thermal-power station, an urban-waste incinerator, and a sewage-treatment plant.*

Industrial Poble Nou: *They're building some shitty apartments on top of a former industrial site. According to a landlord, the flowers in front of his building have an average lifespan of two weeks.*

Fake Beaches, La Mina Ecoparc: *Fake beaches interrupt the natural sand flow. In some places, such as the Maresme coast, the sand has vanished so now the sea is threatening the railway track. Great.*

Not so much with the ecological nightmare, Spain, but roving wild dog packs? Fuck that! We're outta here. What do the Jerrys have to offer...

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BERLIN

JÄNSCHWALDE POWER PLANT

In June of 2005, the German branch of Friends of the Earth pressured the government into banning the dumping of toxic waste. The gov said, "Sure, OK," but this meant that, on July 1, the state suddenly had thousands of tons of illegal toxic waste to get rid of ASAP, and dumping was no longer an option. So they paid the Jänschwalde power station, run by the multinational energy company Vattenfall, 25 to 30 euros a ton to take the toxic waste and BURN IT.

Jänschwalde, being a lignite power plant, had no waste-burning emission standards. They also lacked the equipment to filter out the dangerous chemicals involved, such as mercury, which Jänschwalde is releasing into the atmosphere right this very second, along with carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur dioxide.

Steglitzer Kreisel: *This skyscraper was built in the late 60s with asbestos. A quantity survey done in 2004 said that by 2007 entire wings of the building should be off-limits to human beings.*

Dachsbau at Heiligensee: *In the especially hot summer of 2006, the water table sank by 30 centimeters and its flow changed direction. Some manure leaked into the pond, and ammonium nitrate killed everything.*

Potsdamer Platz: *While they were digging the foundations, the planners embedded sodium silicate gel 20 meters deep into the ground. It leached into the water table and increased the pH levels in the water in the surrounding area to bleachlike levels of hardness.*

Wow. Gold medal winner here. Yay, Deutschland! But, let's not forget Canada like the rest of the world usually does. Whaddya got, tabernacs?

TORONTO

HAMILTON SMOG DAYS

Welcome to Toronto. Now please don't breathe: It's a smog day. That's when the Air Quality Index is so bad that the city warns its workers to take it easy on the whole inhale-exhale thing. But don't sweat it, we had about 30 of these last year, and nobody died that we know of. It's just that there's a thick cloudy cocktail of sulfur oxides, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, hydrochloric acid, nitrogen oxides, and chlorine gas floating over the city.

Sunnyside Beach: *During the 1920s, Sunnyside used to be where Toronto's affluent Parkdale residents congregated for tea and socializing. Now, during the warm season, Sunnyside is unswimmable most of the time due to high traces of* E.Coli. *Oh, and sometimes you can even find weird skinned rodent carcasses lying around. Surf's up!*

Chinatown: *During the summer of 2004, public health officials shut down the entire Dragon City food court citing such health violations as rat- and roach-infested kitchens and food containing traces of salmonella and other hazardous bacteria.*

Pickering Nuclear Power Station: *At the beginning of each year, teachers in the Pickering area hand out potassium iodide pills which are supposed to help prevent radiation poisoning to the thyroid gland if a meltdown ever occurs.*

Fuck this. We need a cabin in the Yukon after all. And we're going to buy some tea-tree oil to put in our hair while we're at it. Yeah, we quit washing it. It's like the government makes you think you have to wash your hair, but you totally don't. Same with buying food. Ow, my overalls are pulling. Anyway, I can't believe I used to have Windex in my house. Hey, wait! Where are you going?

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Picture this: A quiet Los Angeles street. Two lightweight white kids are stumbling home, semi-drunk, from an ironic trip to a local strip club. Suddenly, fate intervenes in the form of a pair of young street toughs carrying a gun and a screwdriver…

DRAMATIC RECREATION BY SANDY CARSON

JONATHAN MIERTSCHIN (BEARDED):

I had been really partying hard for weeks. My apartment was trashed. Daniel came over and we had some beers, and then we went to this strip club called Jumbo's Clown Room. We had some more beers, and around midnight we were drunk and out of money, so we decided to head home.

We were literally at the end of my block, and these kids who looked like they were about 14 or 15 years old were sitting on the steps of an apartment building across the street. They said, "Hey. Give us your money." We were like, "Sorry. Don't have any." Then they got up and started coming up to us like, "No, man, we're serious." And we were like, "What?" We were totally taken off guard, and we just didn't know what was going on.

So one goes to me and one goes to Daniel, to kind of split us up. The kid who had me took out a gun and said, "Naw, dude, for real, give me your wallet." I said, "I don't have any money in it." And he said, "Give it to me anyway."

So I did. I was like, "Take it down to the Coffee Bean, and if you get two more coffees, get 'em to punch that card and get a free one." I didn't say that. He had a gun. But you know, that was all that was in the wallet. I was pretty nervous. You always hear that a 15-year-old kid is going to be the one who'll pull the trigger, because they're—whatever. I just gave him the wallet.

So while this was going on, the other guy had Daniel. And Daniel basically wouldn't give the guy his wallet. The guy was like, "Gimme your wallet," and he was like, "No, there's no money in it, I'm not giving you my wallet."

And then the guy starts getting pretty aggressive, and it looks like he's punching Daniel. It was winter, and Daniel had a big coat on. I was just thinking, like, "Why doesn't Daniel give him his wallet?"

So my guy, he calls to the other guy, like, "Come on, let's go," and I just grab Daniel by the jacket and we run. Daniel was not right. He was grunting, like, "Oh my God. Oh Jesus." I was thinking, "Something is fucked-up with Daniel." But Daniel's kind of a hypochondriac. Something is always fucked-up with Daniel. This had all happened in like a second, so I was just like, "That was, wow, that was… fucked-up."

So we run into my apartment, and Daniel lifts up his shirt, and he's cut up. He's got seven cuts on his chest and back, and two of them look pretty nasty. Two of them look like wounds. You know when you see pictures of Jesus getting cut in the side? That's kind of what it looked like. It was gaping and blood was streaming out.

So we called 911, and the cops and the ambulance got there so fast. They came in, and my apartment was fucking wrecked. There were beer cans and empty bottles of Jack Daniels everywhere. I had this little studio apartment, and it was just fucked-up. And we were drunk, and Daniel was bleeding, and there were like four EMTs and two cops.

So they put Daniel on a stretcher and he was off.

DANIEL HIPOLITO (BEARDLESS):

I was 23, and I had just graduated from college and moved from San Francisco to LA. I had been there two weeks, and it was the first time I'd been to a strip bar. The reason Jonathan and I went out that night was that I wanted to celebrate getting an apartment. It was my first apartment on my own—no roommates—so I was celebrating having spent the last of my money pretty much. We went to Jumbo's Clown Room. It's kind of like a dive bar where there happen to be overage and underage dancers. We were there for about three hours, and I had three pints. But I'm pretty much a lightweight, so I was drunk, in a happy way. I wasn't sick and I didn't have a headache, but I was drunk.

So between midnight and 2 AM we left the strip club. Jonathan lived on Normandie Street, right nearby, so we were talking and walking in front of these 1950s sort of apartments between Sunset and Hollywood. I noticed that suddenly there was no response from Jonathan. We were talking, and then it was quiet. So I turned around to find Jonathan, and he was about 20 feet back, talking to this guy. The guy was holding Jonathan up for his wallet, but I couldn't see any of this, and I was just like, "Heyyyyyy, what's going ooo-ooo-ooon?" And then as I was trying to hail their attention, I felt somebody punch me in my back. I turned around, and this guy wrapped his left arm around the back of my neck with one arm and pulled me to him with the other so I was up against him, face to face. He never asked me for money. He just kept saying, "What's up? What's up? What's up?" and every time he said it he would hit me, or try to. I remember he had a shaved head and he hadn't shaved in a day or two, and he had a little trimmed mustache. He was either really scared or really high, because his eyes were vibrating. And I didn't know it at the time, but he was basically shanking the hell out of me with a sharpened screwdriver.

I'd just heard that in that area of Hollywood there was a new street drug called Tragic Magic—PCP-dipped crack—so I remember wondering if he was on that. I don't know. It was pretty dark, and I was in shock. It's like, I was still in a good mood, because I had never been mugged like that. I'd only been mugged by dudes standing around threatening to beat the crap out of me. Like three dudes moving in closer and closer, "You need to step, you need to step, you need to step." So I totally didn't register what was happening to me.

I think he was freaked out that I wasn't reacting. I don't think he knew that he was just saying, "What's up?" He ripped off the pockets of my jacket. He didn't know why I wasn't giving him my wallet, or crying, or saying, "Leave me alone." I don't think he understood. That was the look I saw on his face, like, "OK, what do I do now?"

He kind of stepped back, and I swear I was about to laugh at the time, because it reminded me of *West Side Story*. He kept looking back over his shoulder at Jonathan and the other dude, kind of holding out his hand with the sharpened screwdriver, waving it toward me, and it almost looked like he was dancing, because he kept looking back over his shoulder and then looking back at me and then back over his shoulder. I don't know. What the fuck, you know?

I don't really know what happened next. I was just kind of watching him and looking for Jonathan and hoping this guy wouldn't come up and grab me again. Next thing I know, Jonathan was right up next to me, saying, "Let's go. Run. Run." So we went to his apartment, and we pretty much ran the whole way, like even in the hallway. Jonathan had really trippy carpeting. It was like all tropical plant leaves and stuff like that. So we get in, and I'm sitting on his couch and we're kind of laughing about it, and then he says, "Dude, you should lift up your shirt, I think… I think you got stabbed." And I did lift up my shirt and I said, "Oh shit."

I didn't know I was stabbed until then because it was all really shallow, and I was in shock. I remember I was worried about money; that's what I was talking about all the way to the hospital, in the ambulance. I was explaining that I didn't have the money to pay for it, and asking if they had a matching program. And I was hyperventilating, too, because once I realized I was stabbed, I didn't know if I was hurt badly or just cut up. I could see that the cuts weren't that long, but they did go down to the white, like where it goes to the lowest layer of flesh right above the muscle, so I could see that whale-blubber skin. And I couldn't see the ones on my back, but I knew I'd bled all over the couch. Jonathan told me so.

The hospital was one of the LA County ones. It was like this ancient, *Dragnet*-looking building, and "I [*gasp*] could [*gasp*] only [*gasp*] talk [*gasp*] like [*gasp*] this," for a couple hours. When I was in the ER, there was this paramedic guy screaming at this woman, "Do you speak English! Do you smoke cocaine! Do you speak Korean! *Hangul*? *Hangul?*"

I refused painkillers because I was in shock, and if something was wrong with me, I wanted to be able to feel it, because I had no family there. So there were stages: ER, waiting area, then they put me in the ICU, and then they sent me up for X-rays. It was during a shift change, so they actually left me alone on a floor, on a metal gurney, for like an hour. I had an IV needle inserted badly, so the tube was going into my arm. Not the needle, the tube itself. It hurt and itched and looked gross. They'd put it in wrong. I had my X-ray and then was left alone and I lay there alone for like an hour, before I got up and took the elevator back down to the ICU.

When I got down there, they were like, "Whoa whoa whoa whoa, don't lay down there. We're not ready for you yet."

Eventually, the doctor came by with his team of interns and immediately took the IV out. I was pretty pissed by then, and one of the interns was like, "You know, you're really lucky. You better stop raising a fuss. You're this close to being put in jail." I was like, "Are you fucking kidding me?" And he was like, "Just stop raising a fuss. If I was the doctor, you'd be in jail right now."

If there's nothing going on tonight don't sit on your ass. Pull out the video camera and film your most attractive friend putting condiments up his ass for some erotic men's site. Sure it seems a little embarrassing, but there's no way anyone's ever going to see it and you'll both make $500.

PS: Never speak of this night ever again.

Oh Lord in heaven above. The way those socks and shoes work together and the way her knee playfully peeks out of her skirt. I'm dicknotyzed.

If you had to imagine someone that knows every fact in the world, he would probably look like this. Google Chan at your service.

If you want to make an award for best people to go karaokeing with, just dip these four in plaster.

It's hard enough to get a good crew together, people you can inside-joke with and all that. If your crew is up for activities (camping, road trips, even murderball), you need to hold onto them and not let go until they get Stockholm Syndrome.

Rad
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BEING BAD NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD
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For the last fucking time: Men cannot have hairdos. Men cannot walk into salons and sit in those big chairs and lean back into a sink while a rich cokehead makes a $200 sculpture on their head. All women know this. That's why they do this look when you take a picture.

Everything was going great, but brown nylons are a bigger dealbreaker than being HIV-positive and joining the KKK.

When someone is this clueless it actually gets kind of scary. Like the way a lot of serial killers are autistic and they don't look people in the eye because they don't get what the big deal is with eyes.

Call me an asshole but people who like to be pissed on are pieces of shit. Actually, shit doesn't even like being pissed on. It just allows it because that's life when you're shit.

Would you rather party with a break-dancing eraser or a guy who thinks Rob Halford isn't gay? How about both, in a parking lot, at ten in the morning, in the middle of nowhere?

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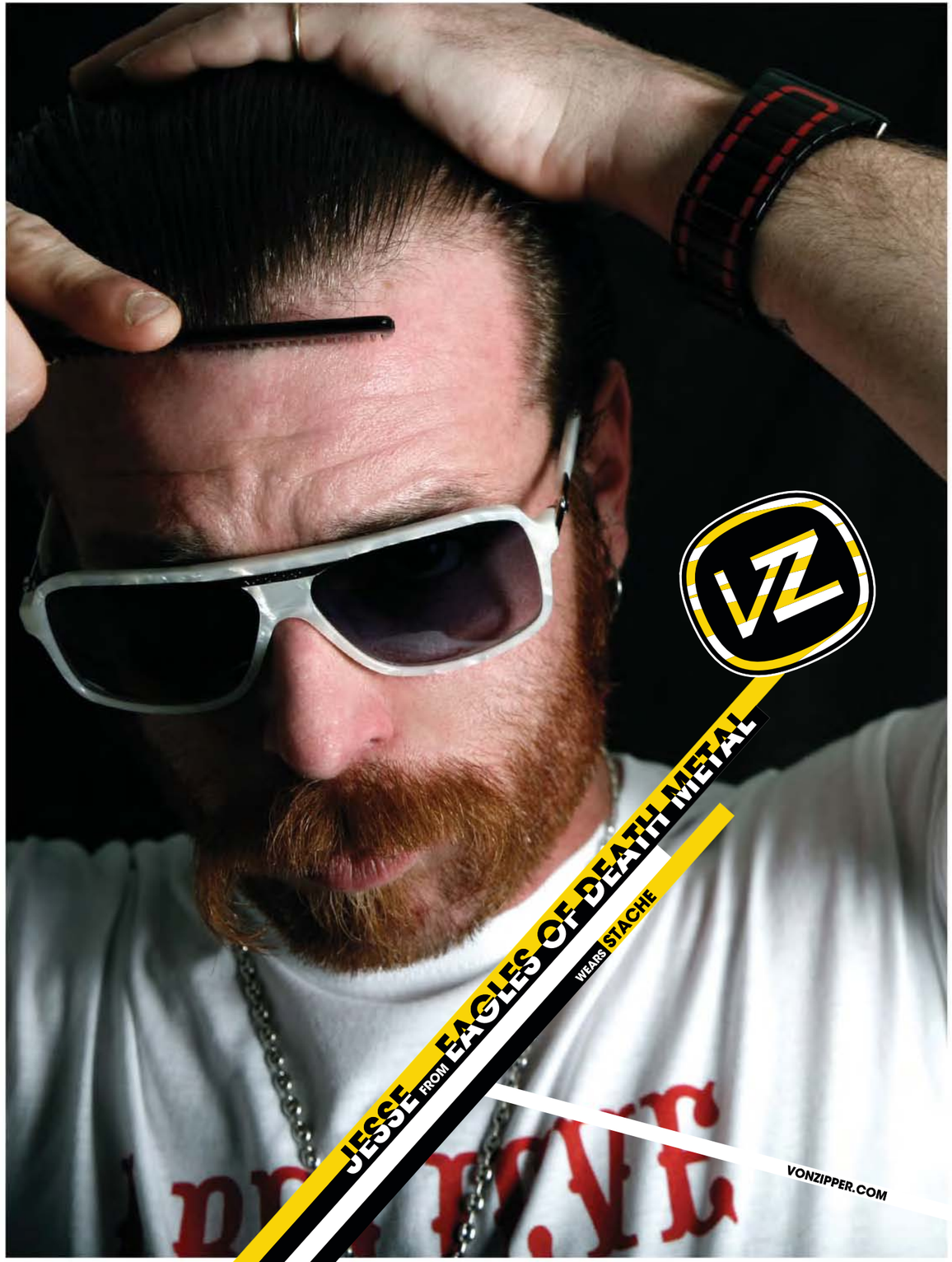
You know when you go home to visit your parents and they get boring around ten, so you go out to see what your old high school buddies are doing these days and the party is so weird and fun you catch yourself thinking, "Wait a minute. Why the fuck did I ever leave this town?"

It takes a real man to admit that he's wrong and an even realer man to gather up his druthers, pick up some flowers, and head over there to apologize. Let's do this, Howard.

Wearing pink is almost as cool as fighting, but if you can combine the two it makes Yin and Yang look like a couple of fags.

We have no idea what's going on here and it's kind of freaking us out, but we'd rather be scared than bored so bring it on.

The only thing better than a girl turning a sweatshirt and jeans into something more heavy-shit than lingerie is said girl asking you if you want to come inside.



"Wait, you too?" **Yeah, I was in the DON'Ts a few years ago, then I got this invitation to come here for the weekend. Apparently some rich guy was in the DON'Ts too and wants us all to get together to plan revenge.** "Oh shit. Like that movie *The Benchwarmers*?" **Yeah.** "I fucking loved that movie." **Me too. Jon Lovitz is my dawg.**

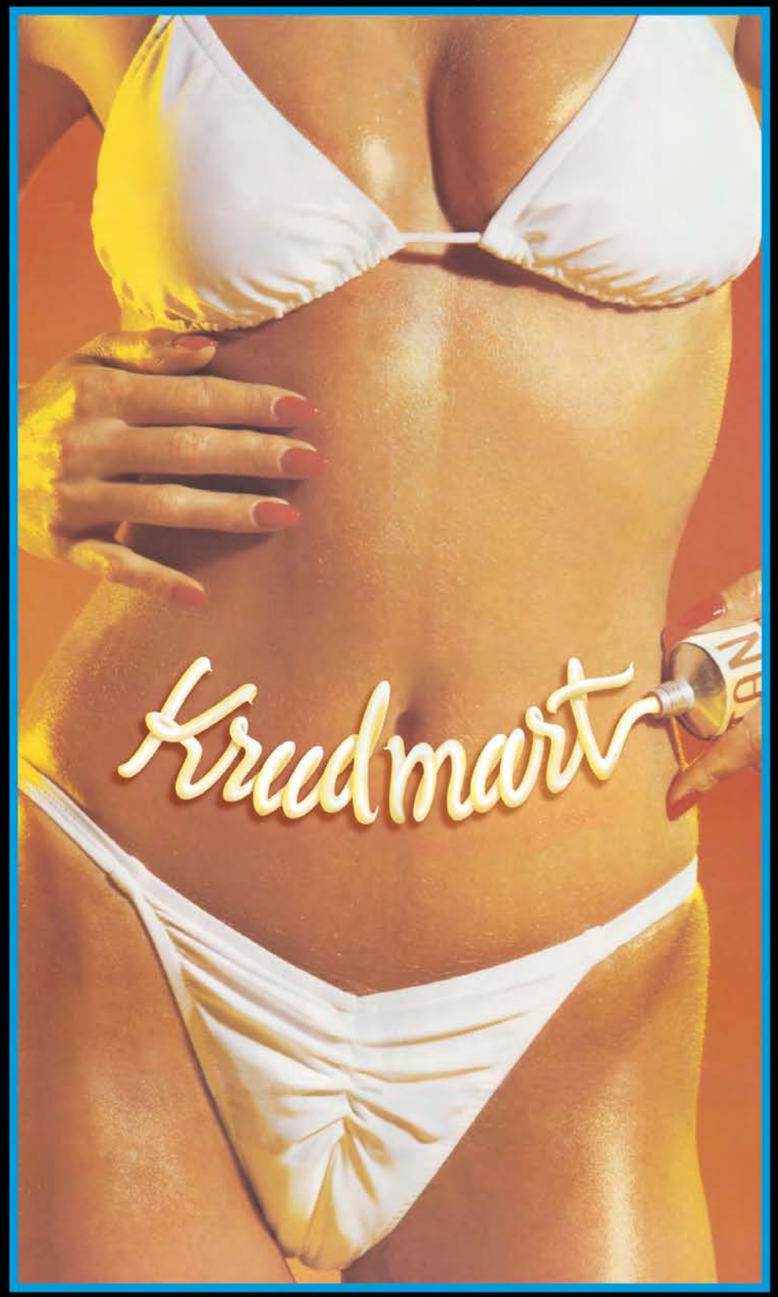
Girls with guns are fucking hot and they give all guys a bulge in the front of their pants, but when she's in Israel things get real dark real fast and the bulge ends up coming out the back of our pants instead.

He's singing that Bronski Beat classic, "Hey God, What the Fuck Did You Do With My Balls?"

Is this what narcs look like nowadays? They can't wear jean jackets with Zoso on the back, so now you have old dudes with "rare trainers," "counterculture" blazers, high-end denim, articulated knees, and Offspring dreads coming up to you and asking if there's any place around here to "score some 'erb."

Thank God for an entourage. If that girl on the left was by herself we might have thought she wasn't a stupid Von Dutch guidette that loves dance and hates books.

If you don't know what they are,
you don't know what you're missing.



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GIRLS OF THE SQUATS

PHOTOS: Gavin Watson STYLIST: Aldene Johnson COORDINATED BY: Pegah Farahmand

Paying rent is a pain in the neck, but paying rent in London is like having your head slowly nibbled off by mean rats with pointy teeth and rabies. In the third quarter of 2006, rents in the capital rose by 20 percent. Everybody groaned and went, "Oh no, I can't take it anymore," and then in the final quarter, they rose AGAIN by 30 percent. It's the highest-ever hike in history according to a survey by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, and, unless you're a millionaire, it really sucks. Maybe that's why more and more people we know are breaking into abandoned buildings and becoming squatters. Gavin Watson went to visit some squats and he said that they're cold, smelly, flea-ridden, and a bit dangerous. Here are some of the girls who live in them.

American Apparel dress, Criminal cardigan, vintage coat

JULIA
28, Kennington

Vice: Hi there! How long have you been squatting for?
Julia: Six months.

Girls always have so much stuff. Where's all your stuff?
It's not much. Most of the stuff I have is found or junk from markets. Since we're all art students we also have all our priceless pieces of art here.

What's the best thing about squatting?
Not paying rent and the freedom that comes with that.

The worst?
Winter.

Hummel top, Franklin & Marshall shorts, Marks & Spencer hat

BETTY
19, Elephant and Castle

Vice: It's fucking freezing in here. How do you deal?
Betty: Well, not paying the rent allows me to use my time in other ways and avoid having some hideous job that I hate. It also allows me to live with my friends and others like me in great spaces.

Do you freak out every time you see a cop?
I don't live in fear of the cops because it is not illegal to squat. However, you can get in trouble while breaking in, so that is always a little nerve-racking. Being pulled out of bed by some huge landlord and thrown on the street with all your belongings is also a worry at first but it goes away the longer you live in a building.

Vintage shirt, Ecko Red & Fly53 t-shirts, Topshop leggings, Nike shoes

MARIA
24, Camberwell

Vice: Isn't it weird waiting for a landlord to come and kick you out?
Maria: Landlords are scary in a "ghost villain" kind of way because you never know when they're going to turn up and whether they will go the legal way or turn out to be a scary porn baron like once happened to a friend.

Do you guys ever throw parties? I bet squatters know how to party.
We had Foals play a gig in our basement where people went mental and which resulted in some "redecoration" involving fire extinguishers, broken walls, and Darren Shitdisco randomly deciding to saw into one of the doors.

Ecko Red top, Gsus jacket, hat model's own

STEPHANIE
20, Elephant and Castle

Vice: How long have you been here?
Stephanie: I've been squatting for just over a year.

Describe your journey to squatterdom.
I had always wanted to initiate live-in artist studios, and when I came across some artists living in a squat on High Street Kensington, I knew squatting was a possible method to realize this dream. After a few months, we formed an art collective called DA.

What's awesome about squatting?
Having an inspiring space in central London to use as an art studio. Creating your own system, rather than letting the system create you. It's about being resourceful and creating an alternative way of living.

American Apparel dress, Topshop tights

KARLEY
21, Elephant and Castle

Vice: How long have you been of the squatter persuasion?
Karley: I've been squatting for nearly two years now and have lived in three different buildings. To be honest I've been pretty lucky in that I've been able to stay in each for a considerable amount of time.

Is there anything especially icky about living in a squat? Besides the word "squat"?
Umm. Not having hot water or heating in the winter is pretty unamazing to say the least. Picture having to boil like 30 kettles every time you want to make a bath. Basically, we all smell pretty bad.

STOCKISTS

Agent Provocateur
www.agentprovocateur.com

American Apparel
www.americanapparel.net

Bijules
www.bijulesnyc.com

Calvin Klein
www.cku.com

Criminal
www.criminalclothing.com

Deborah Marquit
www.deborahmarquit.com

Diesel
www.diesel.com

Ecko Red
www.eckounltd.com

FLY53
www.fly53.com

Franklin & Marshall
www.franklinandmarshall.com

Gsus
www.g-sus.com

Han Cholo
www.hancholo.com

Hummel
www.hummel.dk

La Fille D'o
www.lafilledo.com

Malicious Designs
www.maliciousdesigns.com

Marks & Spencer
www.marksandspencer.com

Nike
www.nike.com

Royal Family Jewels
learoyal@gmail.com

Rubecksen Yamanaka
www.rubecksenyamanaka.com

Topshop
www.topshop.com

Toujours Toi
www.toujourstoi.com

Victoria's Secret
www.victoriassecret.com

Vintage top

CRISTINA
20, Central London

Vice: What's your favorite thing about squatting in a squat with squatters?
Cristina: So many things. I guess mainly that it's so different from everything else. I mean, we're not trying to sell anything, we're not exclusive, and we're not following anyone's rules. It starts to make you think differently too.

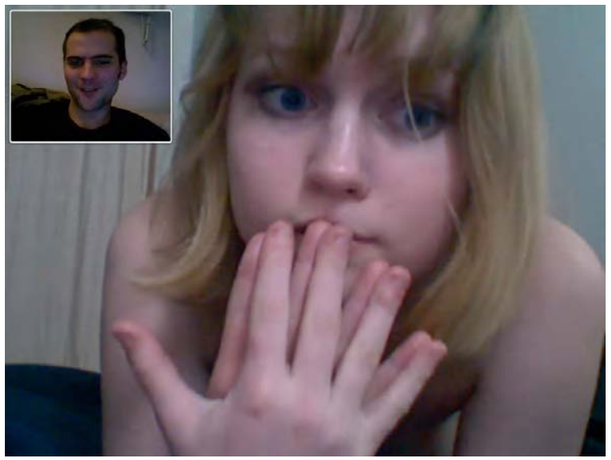
How's that?
It shows you how you can shape your environment rather than it always shaping you.

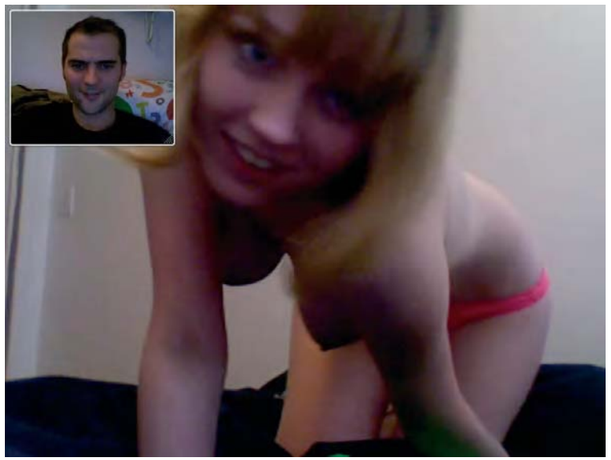
Upper Playground Worldwide
Brooklyn, New York
Photo by: Boogie
upperplayground.com

WANNA CYBER?

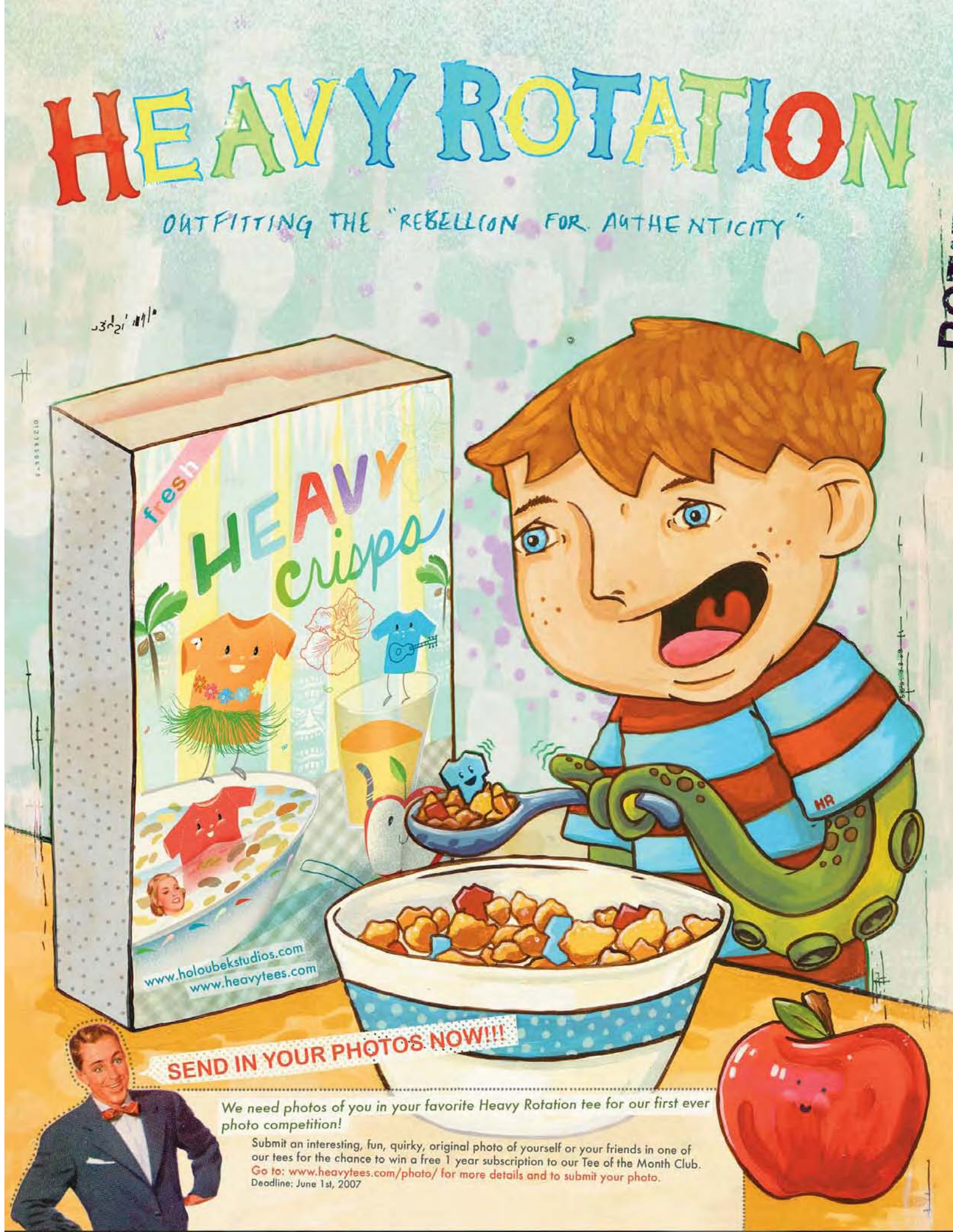
Along with hovercars, hoverboards, and robot slaves, video-chatting is one of the four harbingers of the Future, as foretold in basically every sci-fi book or movie ever made. So far it's the only one we've figured out, and, honestly, it's kind of a bust. No one wants to sit there politely staring at their grandma's furrowed brow while she spends 20 minutes pecking out "Are yo waering the sweter i sdent?" when they could be watching porn and smoking a bong at the same time. That's the whole reason we came up with "chatting" in the first place. The only thing those little webcams are good for is cybering. Seeing boobs. Badgering girls for hours and hours until they take their shirts off. We asked our photo editor Patrick O'Dell to get some of his lady friends to try on some lingerie for his vid-cam in the name of "fashion." (But it was all about tits.)

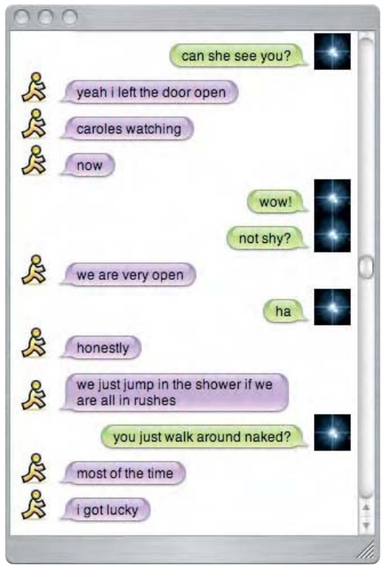
La Fille D'o bra, Bijules necklace

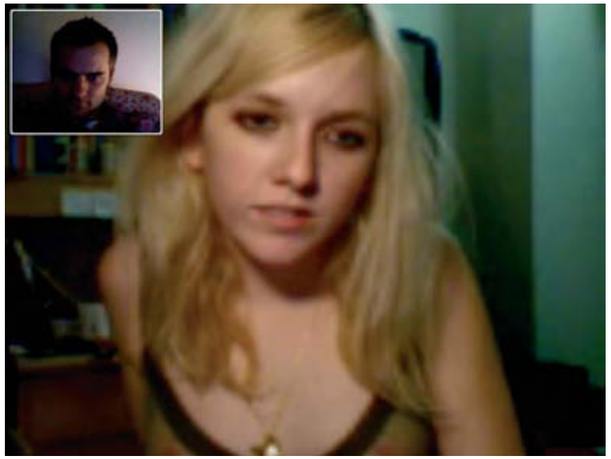


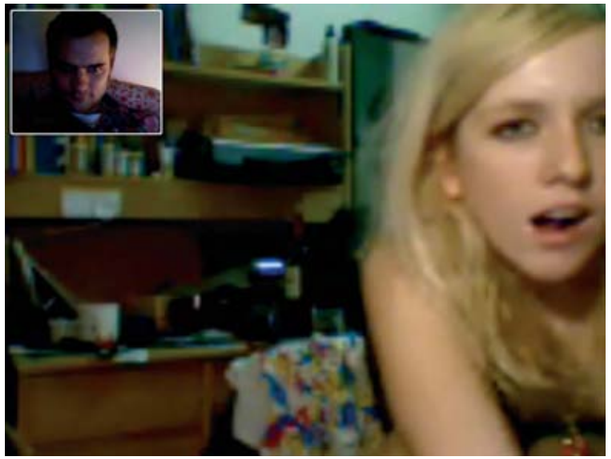


Deborah Marquit bra and panties

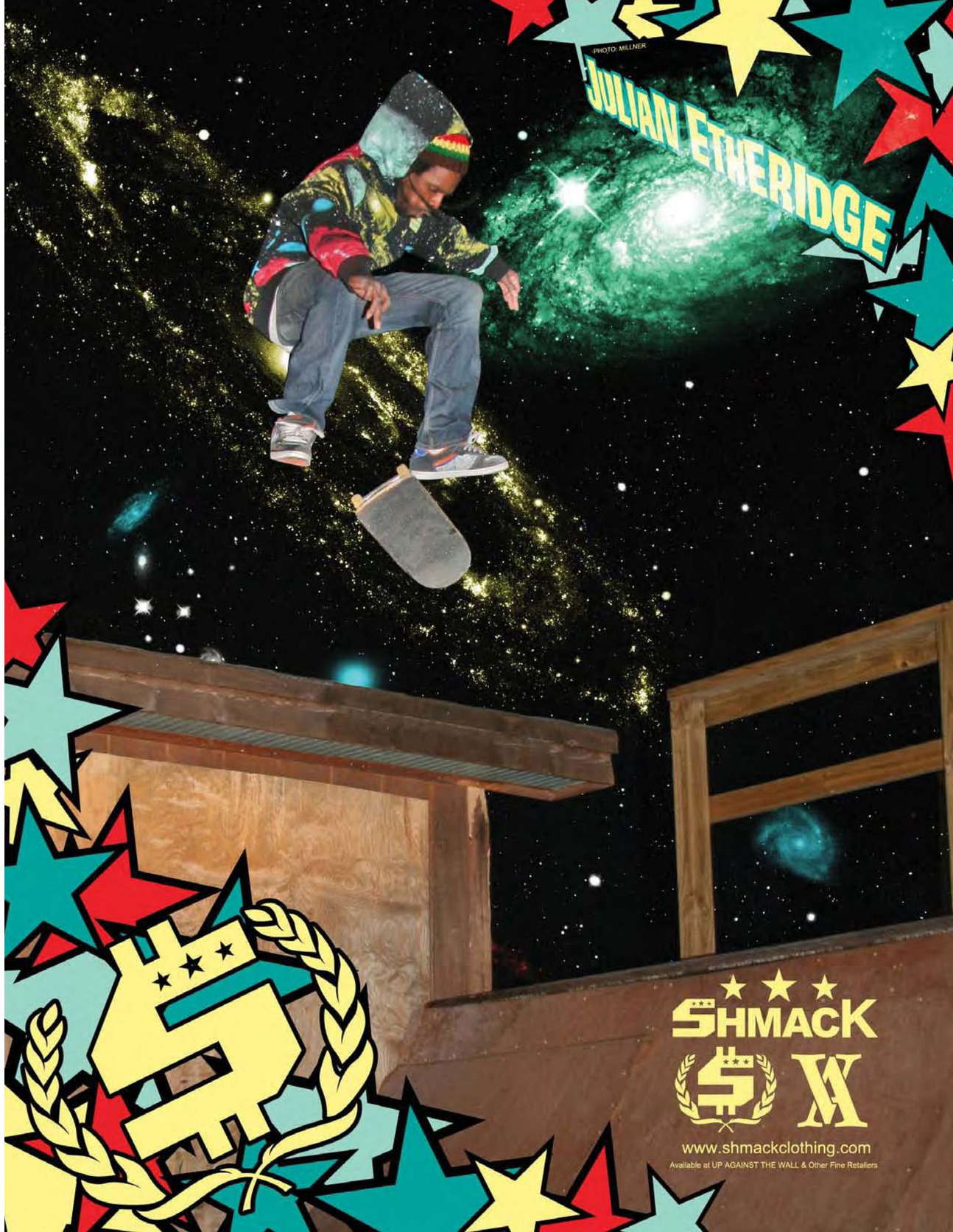








Diesel bra, Calvin Klein panties, Toujours Toi necklace



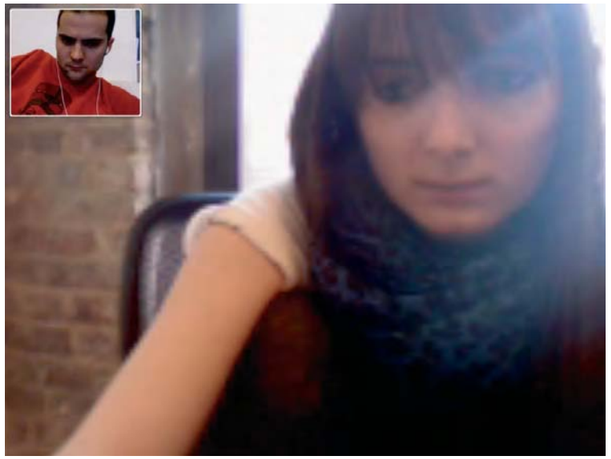
Rubecksen Yamanaka bra, Malicious Designs panties, Royal Family Jewels necklace

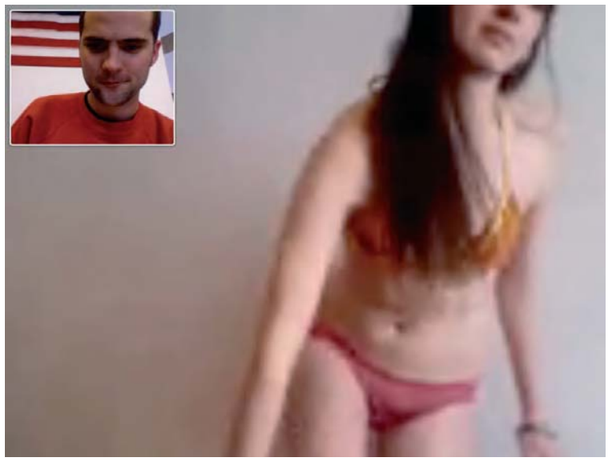
The Diggers Society

T-shirt #4 by Mighty Healthy

The Diggers Society is **Digital Gravel**'s t-shirt of the month club featuring exclusive designs from streetwear's premium independent brands. These designs will only ever be available to members of The Diggers Society. To join, please log on to http://www.digitalgravel.com . Can you dig it?

AS SEEN ON DG





American Apparel bra, Victoria's Secret panties

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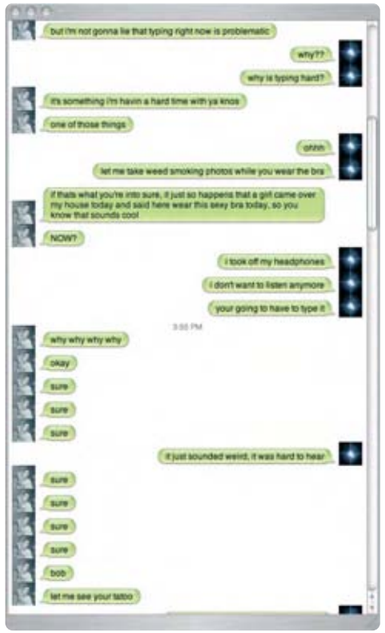

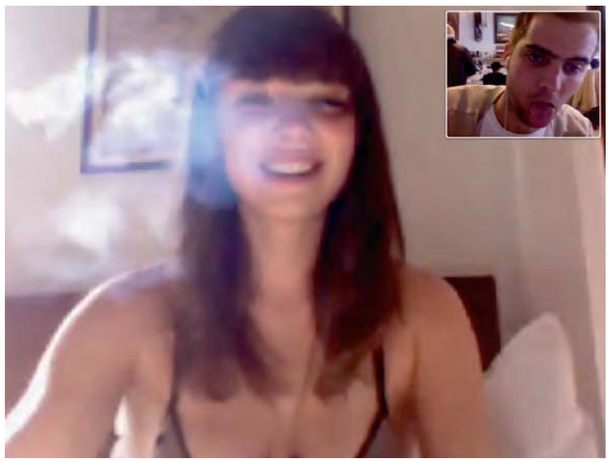

Agent Provocateur bra, Han Cholo necklace

Simon Ngubane: *I began dressing to forget my troubles. Dressing up is about self-discipline and pride. It is a serious business. Clothes make the man. I want to spread swenking to the entire country. It could turn the tide against crime.*

SWANKY SWENKAS

Dressing Sharp Regardless of Cost

PHOTOS BY MARC SHOUL TEXT BY DAVID FLEMINGER

Swenkas are South African men who dress up in tailored suits and hold fashion shows every couple of weeks. At the shows, they're judged for their outfits, their attention to detail, and the little moves they do to call notice to both. It's real flourishy. The winner takes a cut of the door fee, which is generally a fraction of the cost of one suit. At Christmas in Durban, all the local swenking organizations get together for the finals and name the swenkiest guy in all South Africa.

Because most swenkas earn about $400 a month and a top-end tailored suit costs about $1,200, they buy clothes on layaway, spending like a year visiting a suit in the shop and making little homeopathic payments on it, dreaming about it at night. Basically, all that My Beautiful Laundrette, *Horatio Alger stuff is in full effect, minus the gayness and the wealthy relatives on the one hand and America and rising up on the other.*

It is about dreams, friends.

ADOLPHUS MBUYISA

I am one of the organizers of the Joburg swenkas. I don't know how many suits I own, maybe 20 or 30. If I see a suit I like, I simply must have it. I also have lots of shoes, ties, and shirts. It is important for everything to match if you want to win a competition.

My favorite shop is Boxer in the Eastgate shopping center. When my suits need to be cleaned, I only use Exclusive Dry Cleaners in Rosebank. It's expensive, but they are the best. Just doing a shirt costs R110 ($15).

I work at a newsstand in town, so I don't have enough money to pay cash for all the suits I want. That's why I pay them off a little bit each month. At the moment, I am still paying off three suits.

I live in a room in Soweto. My family is very supportive of me and my clothes. They don't mind that I spend so much money on suits—they are proud of me and they like it when I look smart.

Handmade suit, $142. Fumsare shirt, $285. Dobs hat, $21. Floruzzi tie, $57. Upbeat shoes, $214.

SIMON KHOZA

I was born in the village of Nqutu. I am 41 years old. As a boy, I watched my father and brothers compete in swenking competitions. I entered my first competition in Nqutu in 1991, and I won a cow.

Since I moved to Joburg, I have won many swenking competitions. I own 19 suits or more, but I always check with my wife before buying another one. Most of my suits are made by Indian tailors that I know.

I live with my wife and four kids in Jeppestown. I hope that, one day, my son will grow up to be a swenka. I am keeping all my old suits for him. I won't throw them out, even though I am now too fat to wear them.

Jean Pierre suit, $214. Pierre Cardin shirt, $43. Florsheim shoes, $171. Pierre Cardin tie, $29.

SABELO HLATSHWAYO

I was born in Babanango in 1973. My father, Halpheus, was a past chairman of my swenking group. I remember watching him in swenking competitions in Nqutu and Durban. He looked very impressive. My father taught me how to match colors and helped me to develop my own style.

I moved to Joburg in 1992 and I now work at a car-rental company, where I inspect the vehicles. I bought my first suit in 1997. It was black. Now I have a few others. It makes me feel very happy to look good. I'd like to buy more suits, but I cannot afford them yet.

I live with my wife in a room in Malvern. We do not have much money, but she supports me 100 percent. She says she feels good when she sees me all dressed up. I am not taking part in any competitions at the moment, because my wife just had a miscarriage and I am not feeling strong enough to compete. But I am still looking forward to having a family in the future.

Jean Pierre suit, $128. Baker shoes, $107. Cashini shirt, $200. Pierre Cardin tie, $29.

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"On *Cassadaga* Oberst seems to have solved the split personality problem by layering all of it – the optimistic strings and the gritty, impassioned vocals – together on track after spine-tingling track." – Rolling Stone.com

On Tour

4.22	Milwaukee, WI	*Pabst Theatre*
4.23	Chicago, IL	*Riviera Theatre*
4.24	Chicago, IL	*Riviera Theatre*
4.25	Minn., MN	*State Theatre*
4.26	Omaha, NE	*Holland Arts Ctr.*
4.28	Denver, CO	*Temple Hoyne Buell*
4.29	SLC, UT	*Kingsbury Hall*
5.01	Seattle, WA	*Paramount Theatre*
5.02	Portland, OR	*Crystal Ballroom*
5.04	Berkeley, CA	*Greek Theatre*
5.05	S. Barbara, CA	*Arlington Theatre*
5.06	L.A., CA	*Disney Concert Hall*
5.08	San Diego, CA	*SOMA*
5.09	Mesa, AZ	*Mesa Amphitheatre*
5.11	Dallas, TX	*Palladium Ballroom*
5.12	Tulsa, OK	*Cain's Ballroom*
5.13	Austin, TX	*Bass Concert Hall*
5.14	New Orl., LA	*Republic*
5.16	Tampa, FL	*Carol Morsani Hall*
5.17	Orlando, FL	*Hard Rock Live*
5.18	Atlanta, GA	*Fox Theatre*
5.19	Nashville, TN	*Ryman Auditorium*
5.20	Columbus, OH	*Wexner Center*
5.21	Royal Oak, MI	*Royal Oak Thtr*
5.22	Toronto, ONT	*Massey Hall*
5.24	Boston, MA	*WANG Center*
5.25	New York, NY	*Town Hall*
5.26	New York, NY	*Town Hall*
5.28	New York, NY	*Town Hall*
5.29	New York, NY	*Town Hall*
5.30	New York, NY	*Town Hall*
5.31	New York, NY	*Town Hall*
6.01	New York, NY	*Town Hall*

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INSIDE SUDAN

TEXT BY SHANE SMITH PHOTOS BY JAMIE-JAMES MEDINA

Before I went to Sudan, I didn't know much about the conflict in Darfur beyond everyone saying, "It's the worst genocide of our time," and watching footage on CNN of the Janjaweed militia wiping out whole villages. Really, we only decided to go there because one of our favorite photographers in the UK, Jamie-James Medina, had been chatting with an old friend of his who is now a UN press officer in Khartoum. She offered to pull some strings and get us visas and organize flights around the country, so we said, "Fuck it," and got on a plane.

On the flight over I went through this huge binder of research about the situation. It really messed me up. The scale of the devastation was difficult to comprehend: 400,000 people killed and over 2 million displaced in less than four years. This comes right on the heels of another civil war in the south of Sudan that killed more than 2 million people and displaced a further 5 million over the course of the conflict. As the plane landed in Khartoum I had the biggest "Ummmm, what the fuck am I doing here?" moment of my life. From the minute we got off the plane to the minute we flew out again, I was shit-scared. And as it turned out I was totally right to be.

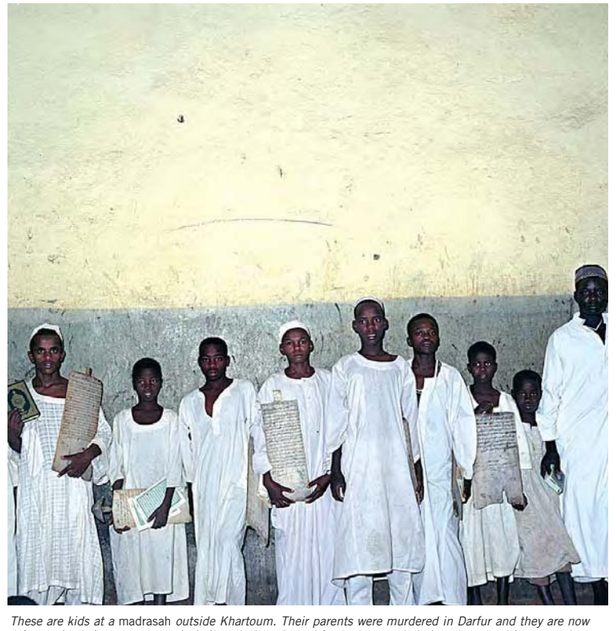
To see more, check out the Inside Sudan *Series on VBS.tv*

This is one of the "Lost Boys" who live in the marketplace. Sometimes they come to the shelter to get a meal, but mostly they just survive off garbage and whatever else they can steal. This kid was totally wasted on glue. He told me that he hadn't been huffing, but when he coughed it smelled like a model airplane was about to fly out of his mouth. He reeked of it. They're all addicted to huffing. It's really sad. They were playing soccer, high as kites.

This is Rasheed in front of his house, which he built out of mud, manure, and straw. He's from Darfur. He was trying to escape with his two-month-old brother when the Janjaweed ripped the baby off his back and threw him into a fire. He showed us around and was very nice to us. When we left him we found out that the secret police had been following us the whole time. We were really worried that we might have gotten him in trouble.

This kid was using a stick with a string and some popcorn tied to it to fish in a creek near the village. He was standing on a sewage pipe. When we asked him why he'd picked that spot, he said it was because the fish come there to eat the shit. As we were talking to him we saw people with donkey carts filling oil drums with the untreated sewage-water to sell as drinking water in the village.

We spotted this graffiti on the way out of Khartoum. It was odd because Sudan is so alien and anti-American that you never really see anything familiar. I thought, "I wonder if 50 Cent or Green Day or whoever know that when they record music it will affect people all the way out here in the middle of Africa."



These are kids at a madrasah *outside Khartoum. Their parents were murdered in Darfur and they are now refugees in their own country. A sheik took them in and feeds them and clothes them, and in return they have to read the Koran. They sit there all day and all night memorizing prayers from these little tablets. Once they master one passage, they wipe down the tablets with water and write another on there to memorize. They're all just sitting in the sand, rocking back and forth and chanting. They have nothing else.*

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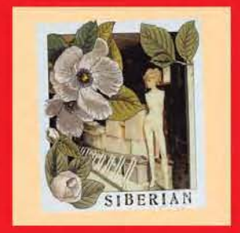

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From left to right: the Boss's son, the Boss, Tom Gabel. Photo courtesy of the author.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Against Me! On the Road

Tom Gabel is the singer/guitarist of one of our favoritest bands ever, Against Me! What follows is a diary he kept on tour with his band across the US and Canada a couple months ago.

FEBRUARY 22: DRIVING NORTH ON I-75, 1:34 AM

It's the second night of tour. We played the State Theatre in St. Petersburg, Florida. The last time we played there was with the Bouncing Souls in 2005. Or was it in 2004? I had this same problem earlier today, remembering the year an event took place.

Before leaving Gainesville this morning I went with my fiancée, Heather, to the Alachua County Courthouse to get a marriage license. I had to fill in what the year of my divorce was (I was married once before). I knew the date—January 11—but the year?

And then I think I heard Jackie (the woman who works in the marriage-license department of the Alachua County Courthouse) snicker as she typed the date of my divorce into her computer. Fuck you, Jackie.

My neck is killing me. It's "rock neck"—whiplash from the first two shows. No matter how much you practice, nothing can really prepare you physically for playing live.

Both tonight's and last night's shows sold out, both great energetic crowds. My ears are ringing.

FEBRUARY 23: DRIVING NORTH ON US 441, 12:34 PM

I wanted last night to be so much better than it was. In fact, every time we've played the 40 Watt in Athens, Georgia, I've walked away from the club feeling unsatisfied. Not to say that the 40 Watt isn't one of my favorite clubs in America. It is. The people who work there are out-of-their-way friendly. The sound onstage and from the crowd perspective is great. The room is a comfortable size, with a capacity of 800. The backstage has three individual rooms for bands, two bathrooms (which is amazing), and a little common room with couches and a coffee table. A couple blocks away from the club is the Grit, one of my favorite restaurants. All of this should equal a great time every time.

Maybe it was the fact that the previous two shows were so full of energy that they made this one pale in comparison. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that I haven't slept for more than four hours in six nights. Maybe it's the stress of trying to finish mixing our new record while starting a tour. Or maybe it's something else, like the fact that my veritable stalker was in the audience tonight.

See, I slept with a "groupie" once. It happened a few years ago. I wasn't yet divorced

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Tom being the epitome of "Rock Guy on Tour." Photo by Andrew Seward.

but I was estranged from my ex-wife. The girl's name was Kathy. She had been following us around on tour for a couple of weeks. We had been introduced to her through a friend of a friend of a friend. Kathy was moving to Gainesville. She had gotten a job as a nurse at the hospital. One night after we were back in Gainesville, we went to the Top for drinks. Afterward we went back to my house. Horrible, sloppy, drunk sex ensued. I remember she started laughing when I was on top of her. Neither of us got off. I eventually just gave up and went to take a piss, then passed out immediately.

The next morning was stereotypically awkward. When she asked if I wanted to get lunch, I told her I had errands to run, which I did. I told her I would call her later on. Which I did not. I also made a point of not picking up my phone when she called later that evening, and all the next week, and sporadically throughout the next month. I just pushed the incident out of my head and left again on tour.

So we were coming through Florida a few months later at the end of a tour. I called an old high school friend to see if she needed me to put her name on the guest list.

"Yes," she said. "I'm coming to the show with your girlfriend."

"My girlfriend?" I asked. I was confused.

It turned out that Kathy wasn't a nurse at all. She was working at Calico Jack's (it's like TGIF or Ruby Tuesday's, but even more depressing). My friend from high school also worked at Calico Jack's. Kathy had convinced my friend that she was my girlfriend. She told her that I sent flowers on Valentine's Day and that I cooked her a spaghetti dinner. Oh, and I was apparently not only paying her rent—I also helped paint her apartment. At least she made me sound like a nice guy. Since I was away on tour, my friend never thought to question it. She just took Kathy's word. When I found out, I called Kathy, asking her to stop lying to people about me.

Yesterday I asked Jordan to get me something for my throat. He came back with suppositories.

Back to the present now: Yesterday before sound check, our drummer, Warren, told me that Kathy had left him a voicemail saying she was coming to the show in Athens. GREAT.

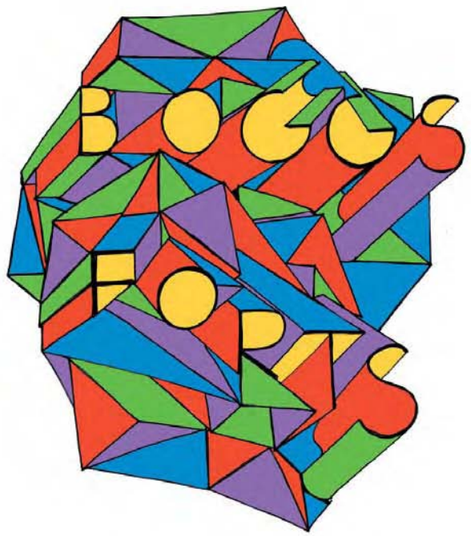
I was standing on the side of the stage watching the River Boat Gamblers' set when by chance I looked into the crowd and there she was, peering over the top of someone's head. Hiding herself in the crowd, staring at me. Then she stood right in front of me while we played. Can you be any more creepy? I was convinced she was going to pull a gun and shoot me midsong. I could almost hear the crack of the gunshot breaking through the distortion of the guitars. I was just waiting to feel the impact. Luckily I made it off the stage without any new holes in me and got the hell out of there.

Look, I realize where I was at fault in the situation. Not calling her and not answering her phone calls was a jerky thing to do. But her posing as my girlfriend was just psychotic. I hold no grudge, but does she have to still come out to shows?

Anyway, maybe that had something to do with the irked feeling I had when I left the 40 Watt.

FEBRUARY 24: COLUMBIA, SC, HEADLINERS CLUB, 6:23 PM

The first time we played Columbia, South Carolina, it was at a venue called Uncle Doctor's. This was before we had a booking agent, back when I used to do all the booking myself. I had set the show up over email without ever meeting the promoter. I don't even remember her name now. She was just some random girl who wrote to the band's email account saying she could set us up with a show. When we pulled up that day we found that the club had double-booked our show with a local band called Capital. This was exclusively the



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club's fault. They promised both bands they could play on the same night. The show was supposed to be Capital's big CD release show and they were furious. We were more than willing to open up for them. All we wanted was a 20-minute set, but they weren't having it. They told us that our show had to happen after theirs, once they and all their fans had left the club. Fine, whatever, there were probably only ten people who had actually come to see us anyway. When Capital played they had a huge homemade backdrop that said their name with a sparkly "$" beneath it serving as their logo. I like to think about this show as the pinnacle of Capital's career, and that I was there to witness it. Their faces were all smiles as they rocked a packed house at Uncle Doctor's. They didn't let some shitty punk band ruin their moment. They soldiered on. We did end up playing eventually, after seven hours of sitting in the fucking parking lot drinking beer. The girl who set us up with the show never came. We walked away with no gas money. We've played Columbia several times since then, and they've been great shows. But I've always held a grudge against the city. In fact, I've always held a grudge against the entire state of South Carolina because of it.

Last night was the first time we've ever played at Headliner's. All day long, I kept having to remind myself to keep my bad attitude in check. It was a good turnout—400-some-odd kids. But it was a weird show. Momentum would build and then dissipate, build then dissipate. I think it was because we were selfish and played too many new songs. We kept trying to win them over until the very last note was played. I hope people enjoyed themselves.

FEBRUARY 27: RICHMOND, VA, QUALITY INN, 3:30 AM

The show at Alley Katz was oversold by somewhere around 200 tickets. More than 600 people were crammed into a room with a legal capacity of 450. We took the stage around 9 PM. We launched into the first song and kids immediately started pouring onto the stage, tripping over the monitors and into us. Inevitably, they always go to grab the microphone stands to catch themselves. If we're lucky, the mic stands just fall to the ground. If we aren't, teeth meet microphone and bloody lips ensue.

One girl in particular got up onstage and managed to completely stop the second song by kicking over Andrew's mic stand and then unplugging my guitar pedals with her feet. For good measure, she gave the drum set a big kick. She looked like a child having a temper tantrum. We started the song again and seconds later another crowd surfer landed on the stage. Before jumping back into the crowd, he knocked Andrew's bass completely out of tune.

MARCH 1: DRIVING TO NEW HAVEN, CT, 1:38 PM

I spent yesterday, our day off, drifting in and out of a NyQuil-induced haze. Woke up feeling like complete shit. After eating a breakfast of bland vegetable penne pasta from the Olive Branch (a subpar Olive Garden knockoff attached to our hotel lobby, which had neither free breadsticks nor salad), I went to Target and did some shopping (socks, soap). Got back to the hotel room and popped two more NyQuils, then slept for four hours. I needed the sleep. Plans were made to go see the 8 PM showing of *Reno-911!: Miami*. It turned out to be just as bland as brunch at the Olive Branch. Maybe Pikesville, Maryland, just has a way of making everything bland.

Some jolly fellow with an Against Me! tattoo. Photo by the author.

Today the NyQuil has left me in a foul mood. The backs of my eyes ache. My sinuses are clogged. Everything everyone says is annoying, and every email that comes to my BlackBerry is unwanted. It's definitely either the NyQuil or all the weed I've been smoking.

MARCH 2: NEW HAVEN, CT, TOAD'S PLACE, 1:04 AM

Three hundred crunches. Sixty pushups. Stretch out the legs, stretch out the arms. Get the blood moving. You don't want to hit the stage cold. The house is packed. We start playing and the room explodes. The crowd is louder than us at points. A sea of hands and bodies. At one point a kid gets up center stage and starts sieg-heiling. Jordan and John both grab him, drag him to the door, and boot him out. The song stops, and we are at a loss for words. Did that really just happen? The show goes on. During the encore, the stage is overrun by kids. We're trapped. We can't play—we can't move. All we can do is sing along, wait to make our escape when the song ends, and pray the amps don't come toppling down. I feel bodies pressed against me. An arm is thrown around my shoulder. A girl grabs me and plants a kiss on my cheek and tells me she loves me. There is no greater high than this. There is nothing more addictive.

Afterward, we take some photos, sign some autographs. The club clears out. The gear gets packed and loaded. I change clothes, grab my bag. Everybody piles into the van to leave for the hotel. Tomorrow we will wake up and do it all again.

MARCH 3: DRIVING TO BURLINGTON, VT, 2:17 PM

Bruce Springsteen commands a room. Everyone around him pretends to be immersed in conversation, but really their attention is on the Boss. They're watching him out of the corners of their eyes. They can't believe they are in the same room as Bruce fucking Springsteen. Neither can I. I want to hear every word he says. I want to shake his hand, ask to get my picture taken with him.

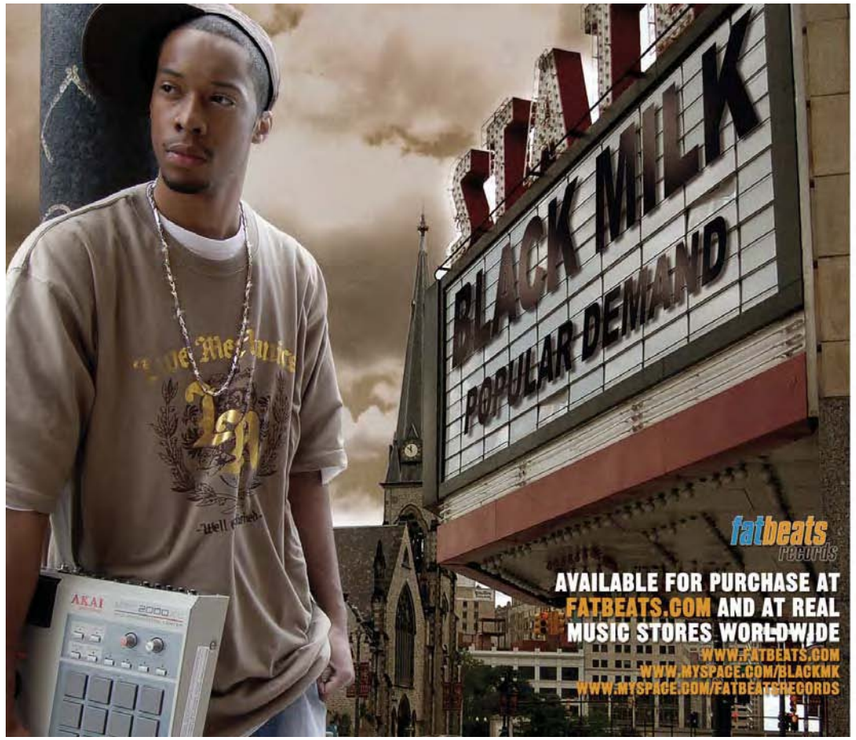
How fucking cool is that? Bruce Springsteen and his son hanging out backstage at my band's show. Last night, Sayreville, New Jersey, at the Starland Ballroom. Our largest-ever headlining show. 1,890 people coming to see my band. 1,890 people including Bruce Springsteen and his son.

He comes backstage after the show is over. I introduce myself and tell him thanks for coming. I talk to his son briefly. I can see the resemblance. On his way out, I ask for a picture. I couldn't resist. I might have to prove this someday. He tells me that my band was very "soulful."

MARCH 4: QUEBEC CITY, QC, THE IMPERIAL THEATRE, 4:25 PM

It took two hours for us to make it across the border. Two hours to look at all our passports, enter our names into their computers, and check for criminal records. They fill out our work permits, and we pay for our work permits. We give them the inventory of merchandise we are crossing with, and we pay the taxes due. We do everything legal and legit. In all of our travels we have never had more difficulty crossing a border than the Canadian border. This was my first time crossing with a newly acquired letter

Continued on pg. 126



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No Age Guys Have Funny Names

LA duo No Age make really fuzzy music, which is my favorite. Everything sounds better under a fuzzy layer of fuzziness, doesn't it? I feel like it's something psychological, but I'm not sure what. Something about the far-awayness of people's voices is soothing to me. Or whatever—it just sounds cool and fucked-up. No Age play catchy tunes that are cool and fucked-up and they are cute and have cartoon-character names. Basically everything you'd want in a band.

Vice: Hey Randy Randall, is that your real name? Randy. Randy Randall. Gosh, that's fun to say.
Randy Randall: Yes! I'm glad you asked that. It was my dad's name, Randy Lee Randall. I guess my parents weren't creative enough to come up with anything else. Or maybe they just wanted to fuck with me. I always look at it like the Johnny Cash song "A Boy Named Sue." My dad wasn't always the nicest of guys and I like to think that he knew he wouldn't always be around to help me out so he gave me the same fucked-up name he had, thinking it would make me tough the same way it had made him tough… But it didn't.

How has having such a retarded name affected your life?
Randy: Here's the general conversation I have at least once a week: "Hi, I'm Randy Randall." Pause. "Really? Like, Randall Randall?" "No, just Randy." I don't mind—it's really helped me with job applications. I go in for an interview and they're like, "Randy Randall! We've been waiting for you!" It's like they already know me and I'm the office funny guy before I even get the job.

And Dean, what's your last name? I hear it's quite something.
Dean Spunt: Spunt. Dean Spunt. It's Russian I guess.

Wow… Heavy.
Dean: Obviously when I was a kid I got, "Hey, Cunt! Hey, your name is Dean Cunt!" all the time. I was just like, "Ha ha ha, good one." Also, in LA there's a small chain of doughnut shops called Spudnut, so I got that too. My whole life it was either "Hey, Spudnut!" or "You Cunt." I guess it's funny.

Spudnut! AHAHAHAHA! That is hilaaaaarious. Where does the name No Age come from?
Randy: It was the name of a compilation that Greg Ginn put out on SST. It was *Process of Weeding Out* era, and he was really into instrumental music, so he made all the bands on his label do instrumentals for this record.
Dean: It's the worst music ever. Like, imagine all the cool bands on SST, but later and sucky. And just playing instrumental jams.

So, what's on the horizon for No Age?
Randy: Right now we're putting out five vinyl-only EPs all on different labels.

Now why would you do such a thing?
Dean: We thought it would be funny. Plus it's an excuse to design five awesome-looking things. We have a shitload of ideas.

MEG SNEED

No Age's five EPs are out now on Teardrops, Upset the Rhythm, Deleted Art, Post Present Medium, and Youth Attack.

Photo by Bethany Black

A FULL POUCH OF THE NIGHT'S URINE

Clockcleaner Cleans Clocks

Clockcleaner play music in the great Scratch Acid tradition of not giving a fuck about the listener. It's a feedback-heavy, midtempo march from start to finish, with little to no regard shown for conventional-song-structure silliness like having a chorus. Other things that Clockcleaner and lead singer John Sharkey seem to have little to no regard for include people with cerebral palsy, other band's merch, and ever playing in clubs again. We talked to him about all of that and the inherent contradiction of being an awesome band from Philadelphia.

Vice: You just got back from tour this morning, right? Any lowlights?

John Sharkey: Half the members on tour—including myself—getting food poisoning in Memphis and then vomiting and pissing out of our asses for eight hours afterward. Also shitty: some hotels not having weight rooms, Japanese punk bands, and Louisville, Kentucky.

Louisville seems to suffer from some of the exact same problems that plague Philly, namely, bike culture and a desperate grasping for some kind of "local scene" that expired about a decade ago.

Yeah, we didn't even get to see the rape-accusing bike scene. All we got were the fat wives of the local openers. We played like champs though. That night is memorable for one reason: I took out the lighting truss while not paying attention and sliced my arm up real good. I was covered in blood. I also wiped my ass on the sound guy. We win.

How'd the sound guy like that move?

He reacted the same way they all do: "Do you guys think you're getting paid after that?" We got paid.

So is the majority of hearsay about Clockcleaner actually true then? Beating up retards, banned for life from venues, etc.?

Some true, some rumors. The one thing that has stuck with us is the Bad Wizard story. We played this unmentionable shithole in Philly with them a while back and during the set I dislocated my shoulder. So after the show I go into the "green room" to get my coat and these cuntwhiffs are sitting there doing blow. Up to this point I'd had zero contact with them. I walk in only to be asked how much we made that night. I say, "I don't know, a hundred," then that fat Mr. Kotter-looking twerp singer replies with, "Oh yeah? We made six, HAHA-HA." Since my arm couldn't take aim I decided to let my bladder do the work. By work I mean covering the merch table with a full pouch of the night's urine. That started the bannings in Philly.

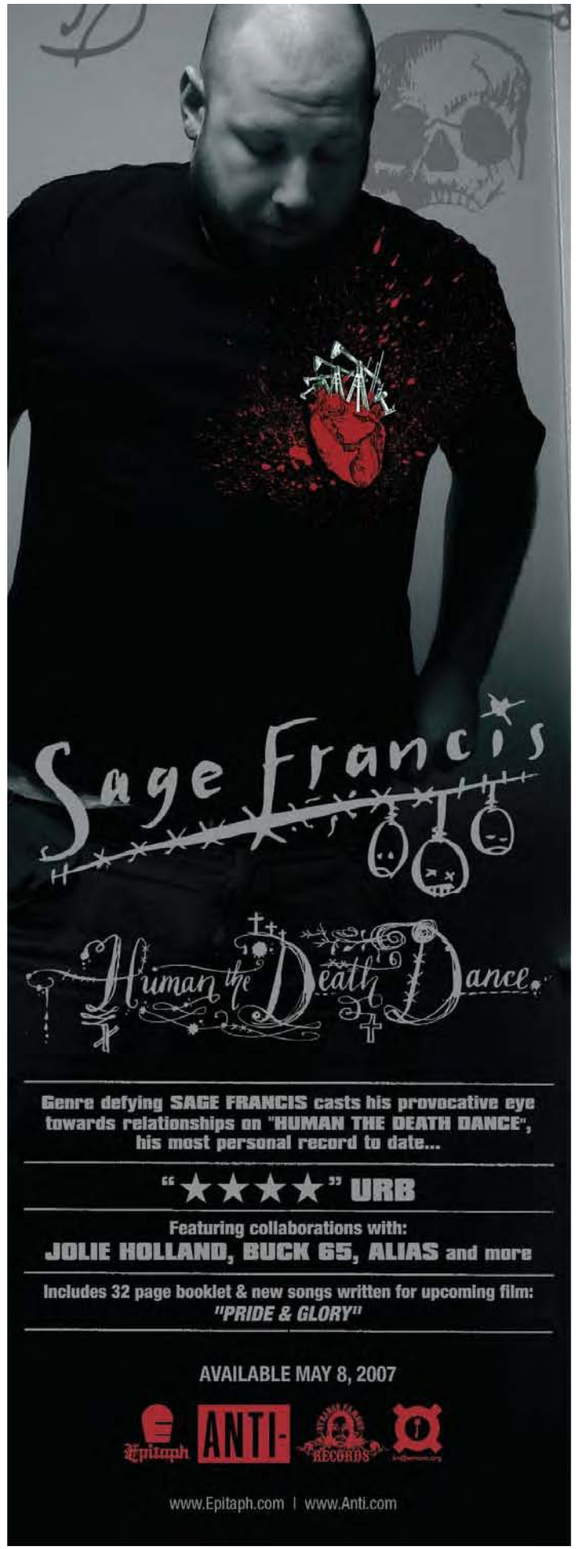
Not like you're missing much. Is there anything redeeming about Philadelphia these days, musicwise?

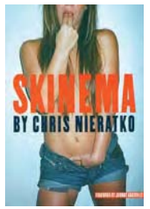
Well, I can't pull a good band out of my magic hat, but I can tell you some bands to avoid. Man Man suck horsedick. Ten years ago they would have been a ska band. Fake names only work if you can actually win a fight. Dr. Dog is another one. I went to a record store and they were doing an in-store. There were literally parents with infants there. Most bands from Philly have names like Chunky Briefcase and only play the Khyber and live with their ex-girlfriends four years after the fact. That's Philly... Privileged and mediocre.

RYAN DUFFY

Clockcleaner's new album, Babylon Rules, *comes out this fall on Load Records. Their previous CD,* Nevermind, *is out now on Reptilian Records.*

Photo by Manuel Dominguez, Jr.





Since we're putting out compilations of both their columns in the next two months, we thought it'd be cute to have *Skinema* scribe Chris Nieratko and *Dear Diary* firecracker Lesley Arfin interview each other about each of their books. In this issue we've got Lesley giving Chris the business. Next month we'll give it the ol' switcheroo and see what's been up in Arfin's world. You like how that works? It's called symmetry.

Lesley Arfin: I'm really bad at interviewing people, just FYI.
Chris Nieratko: That's OK, I'm really good at being interviewed.

Oh good. So, I'm more than halfway done with your book, but I fucking love it!
Really?

I love it! Dude, I'm like, shocked. I mean, I always really liked the column, so I guess I sort of knew I'd like the book. I keep telling everybody that it's my new bible.
Yeah, I'm kind of like Jesus without a beard.

Do you like your book?
I don't know if I like it. My mom can't read it, so it makes me sad.

She can read it, you just don't want her to! Do you think she will?
No, she can't read it because she can't read English.

Oops! Well now that you're done do you feel really proud of yourself?
Yeah, because I feel like I've swindled *Vice* yet again. All the stuff they've already paid me for once, they're paying me for again. If I had a really thin mustache I'd be twisting the ends of it and laughing.

I think a lot of people are going to read it.
Maybe some frat boy will read it on the toilet. I'm really hoping people at Harvard in the literary department will recognize my amazing grasp of the single-syllable-word genre.

When people ask you what your book is about, which I'm sure they do 20 times a day, what do you say?
I say, "Nothing… What's yours about?" Then they say, "I don't have a book out," and I say, "Haha, you're a loser!"

I would say it's thinly disguised porn reviews, but really it's personal essays about a guy who is a self-proclaimed asshole. But the thing about your little stories is that you constantly say that you're a dick. Like, you know it and you're funny about it. It definitely makes me like you a lot. It makes me understand why so many girls want to fuck you.
It's funny because I thought about it and I can't make heads or tails of why I ever got laid because just being in the vicinity of a pretty girl makes me a stammering, bumbling fool. But thanks to the healing power of alcohol and drugs I turn into a fantastically charming man. I don't understand what's wrong with women and their self-esteem to make them want to bed down with me.

But you're extremely loyal to your wife now, so those days are over.
Well not necessarily, because they invented something called a *ménage à trios*, which I know very little about—but I've heard things. I'm all for that although she's not.

Have you ever been in therapy?
I couldn't afford therapy so I just watched Richard Pryor instead and kind of went that route. It also has to do with me never knowing the right thing to say. I find myself saying just awful things that people interpret as me trying to be funny. My friend had a miscarriage, and the doctor told her that the baby just stopped growing inside her. I told her, "Look, you don't want that baby anyway—that's a lazy baby. It doesn't even want to grow on its own now, it's never going to want to leave the house. It's going to be 30 staying at home. Now you can go and make a hardworking baby."

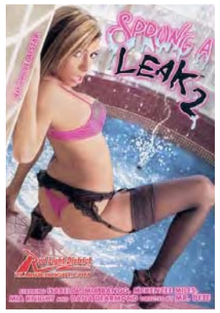
Do you want to have kids?
Yeah, I'm on some George Foreman shit. I'm going to have a bunch of kids and name them all Chris. And you know my wife's name is Cris? When we decided to get married I was like, "I don't know if I want to marry you, but your name's Cris, which means I can call out my own name during sex, so I'm going to go with it."

Did you have fun writing the book?
Yeah, it was fun because I was completely blacked out for a majority of the instances in the book—even when I was writing them. So it was like discovering a secret chapter in my life. It was like, "No way. I did what?"

I'm really excited for your book and happy for you. I sort of have a literary crush on you. It's too bad that you're married, but it's probably also a good thing.
Well, like I said, you, me, and my wife, we could meet, talk, have drinks—see where the night goes. We could write stories together. We could get hypodermics and fill them with love and shoot up.

Skinema by Chris Nieratko and Dear Diary *by Lesley Arfin are being published by Vice Books in May and June respectively. Available online at www.americanapparel.net.*

Photo by Matt Sharkey



SPRUNG A LEAK 2

Clubredlight.com
Dir: Mr. Pete
Rating: 8

I am by no means a rich man. This *Skinema* book that's just come out has put some money in my pocket, but not much—barely enough to repave my driveway. Yet I like to pretend that I'm wealthy. In January, I completed a new bathroom in my basement with a two-person shower, a Japanese-style toilet that shoots water up my ass then hot-air-dries me, and, most importantly, a three-person jacuzzi tub. The tub is my favorite. It's the only place of pure relaxation for me and the wife during the workweek. My six-year-old nephew seems to appreciate it too. The other day he said, "Man, this bathroom is great. It's like yous guys are rich… BUT YOU'RE NOT!" No, we're not, Josh. Thank you for reminding us.

But we are a helluva good time. Our friend Brandi (the brunette in the photo above) came over and we all got loaded in the jacuzzi a few months back. Sadly, no lesbian action broke out, nor did anyone get naked, but we had a swell time nevertheless.

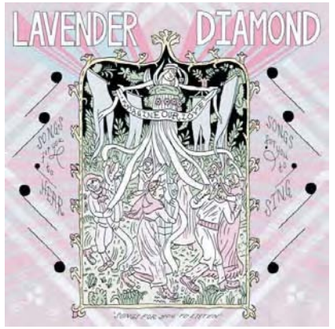
I sent my photographer buddy Matt Sharkey some of the photos from the tub to make him jealous. Matt is one of those nudie photographers who is always shooting girls in various states of undress, so I don't know what I was thinking by sending him photos of fully clothed people in a tub. I suppose I was just happy to be around two women in bikinis and had to show someone who would appreciate it. Instead Matt took it as some sort of challenge and a week later he emails me photos of him, his wife Dalila (the blond in the photo), and Brandi in their EIGHT-person hot tub, completely naked and performing some very sensual acts.

I was pissed. I felt deflated. My jacuzzi fantasies had sprung a leak. I was riding a high and he had to trump me. So I emailed him, his wife, and Brandi, and told them to fuck off. That they were jerks. And I hated them. "Lose my email, my phone number, and any other means of modern communication you might have for me. This is the end for us. Sayonara, suckers. You have broken my heart for the last time."

Generally people do not take me seriously—that's the way I prefer it. Life is too short not to enjoy it for the joke of a roller-coaster ride that it is. So you can imagine my surprise when I received a flurry of emails from Matt and the girls apologizing for making me sad. Rather than letting them know I was over it, I kept up the charade in hopes that maybe I could guilt one of the girls into my bed, with my wife. Soon after, my birthday rolled around with very little fanfare aside from a kiss on the cheek from my lady and a card from my mum and a strange package from FedEx. I didn't even know FedEx knew my birthday. They didn't. But Matt and the girls did and their gift (above) is framed over my mantle. It's not quite the offer of lesbian sex, but nothing ever is. Not from FedEx.

CHRIS NIERATKO

For more of Chris go to Chrisnieratko.com or NJSkateshop.com



BEST ALBUM OF THE MONTH: LAVENDER DIAMOND

TIMBALAND
Shock Value
Interscope

Once in a while an album comes out that redefines how wack music can actually get. Remember Q-Tip's 2001 jazz album that never came out? Well, here's another perfect example. Timbo is arguably the best music producer of the last ten years and the fact that he managed to reinvent pop music in 2006 ain't too shabby either. But the guy can't make a solo record to save his life. From Justin Timberlake misses to autotuned Pussycat Dolls disasters, from horrendous rap-rock collabs to an unexplainable Elton John intro, *Shock Value* is one atrocity after the next. And then amid all this mess you have the first single, which is totally fresh. Go figure.
BUSTA NUT

DEVIN THE DUDE
Waiting to Inhale
Rap-a-Lot

Devin the Dude records are kind of a no-brainer at this point. The guy's not topping 2002's *Just Tryin ta Live* anytime soon, but you're always going to get a couple of gems here and there. On *To tha X-Treme* from a couple of years ago, you had that charming James Taylor joint. Now on *Waiting to Inhale*, there's "What a Job": A beautiful ballad about how fun it is to rap featuring Snoop, who's just as funky as he is washed-up, and André 3000, who decided to rap his tuckus off again. The rest of the album is a little boring, but good-boring.
WHOADIE ALLEN

REDMAN
Red Gone Wild
Def Jam

Now this is really sad. A decent album that's got as much of a promo push behind it as recent Def Jam efforts by, let's see, Meth, the Roots, LL, Bleek, Young Gunnas—in other words, everybody besides Nas, 'Ye, Jeezy, and Jay. And that's zip-zero. I don't know what they're trying to do in that building. Remember when *Muddy Waters* came out? Red was stylin' on 'em. Now I just feel bad for the guy. Like, I hate to say it and I hate this catchphrase, but is hip-hop really… dead? Weezy, hurry up and drop that Kanye-produced record already, cuz the game is hurting.
DAVID DASH

DJ SOUL
Assorted Donuts: A Tribute to J Dilla
Okayplayer

We're just going to keep big-upping Dilla until the end of time, period point blank.
BLAQUE PAK

RICH BOY
Rich Boy
Interscope

MIMS
Music Is My Savior
Capitol

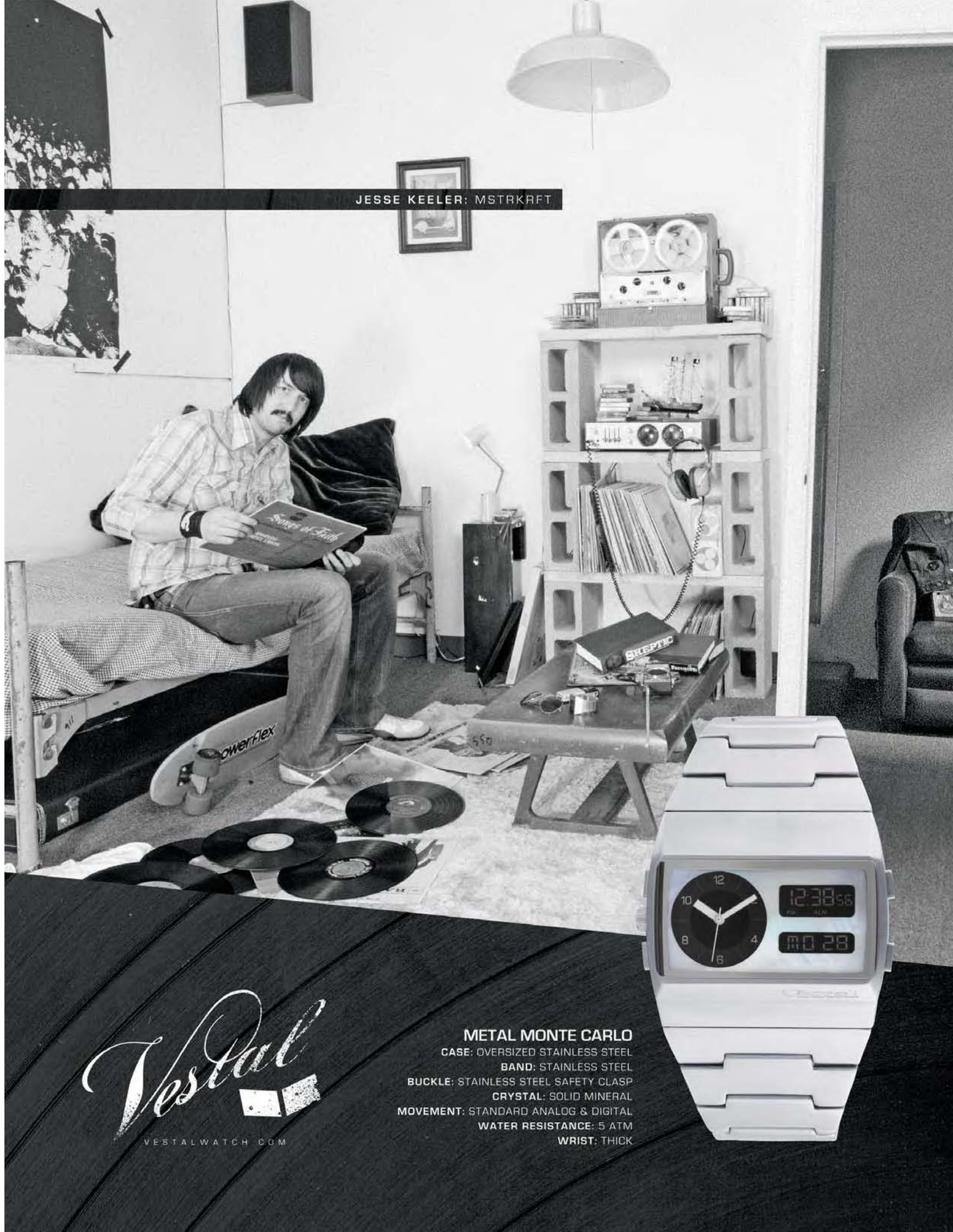
Rich Boy's "Throw Some Ds" and Mims's "This Is Why I'm Hot" (randomly A&R'd over six months ago on the *Vice* blog—seriously, look it up) are the year's two biggest rap jams. So what happens when those guys proceed to drop albums? Nothing.
MACHO

DJ CRAZE
Bass Sessions
Disque Primeur

Due to the alarming lack of good rap albums this year, we're going to start reviewing a few mixtapes again. Never mind Baltimore club, baile, or juke—what the game needs now is a proper and thorough revival of the booty clap. Finally stepping away from a genre of music that's too embarrassing to even type, Craze delivers an in-depth and authoritative Miami-bass lesson, which undoubtedly gets the Pitbull stamp of approval. Listening to this you realize the slow joints are actually the freshest.
SMUTTY RUFF

CEX
Sketchi
Temporary Residence

I have no clue what the actual music on here sounds like, but covering the back of the CD with that virtual kiddie porn that crops up when you've gone too far down the bunny hole of internet-jack-offing is nothing short of genius. It's like making the entire case out of scumbag kryptonite. Maybe someone without a bloody millstone for a browser history can tell you whether or not the album is actually worthwhile—best I can recommend is handing this to each of your friends and timing how fast their faces go from pink to sheet-white to crimson.
LEROY GUMPTION



WORST ALBUM OF THE MONTH: WILCO

KOSHEEN
Damage
Moksha

"Electronica" sounds like such an impressive musical niche to be couched in. It definitely has a better ring to it than "We sound exactly like the Eurythmics" or "We sound like Sade singing for Front Line Assembly… aka the Eurythmics." At the end of the day, though, who effing cares—everyone loves the Eurythmics and so it follows that everyone will love Kosheen. One hundred percent not kidding.
TINGLY TOE BUTTER

JOE BEATS
Reverse Discourse
Bully

Yes, I admit I liked that Non-Prophets album. Looking past the obnoxiously boring and obvious lyrics, the production was AH-mazing. Finally, we get to hear some simple fuck-you beats without that fat bald sissy ruining it. Then again I could probably listen to anything dark and ambient right now and I'd be into it—I just got dumped. This is good self-loathing music to hate the world to. Also, I lost the button on my coat and I miss it.
RENDEL KATLEY

DINOSAUR JR.
Beyond
Fat Possum

Well, color me a cynic! I would have thought a reunion album by the reconvened Dinosaur Jr. "classic lineup" wasn't cause for much besides practicing my "I don't care" face, but I'll be damned if this is not only mostly listenable but at least half-good! J Mascis (who looks disturbingly like my grandma) steady shreds on most of these jams, Lou Barlow manages to exhume his shriveled corpse of a heart for one solid number, and Murph seems to have lost some weight. I just did the math and this is the fifth-best Dinosaur Jr. album.
NAMEY MCNAMES

MACHINEFABRIEK
Slaapzucht
Root Strata

Perfect, an album of German droning noises. I was really hoping for something like this because one of my favorite pastimes is pretending to have tinnitus. I can put this on and spend the day walking around the house asking, "Hey, do you hear that? Wait… How about now?" It would be so much fun except that I live alone.
NOISE NERD NELLY

THE HORRORS
Strange House
Stolen Transmission

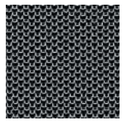
Fuck it, I'm backing this—music, fashion, the whole shtick. Is it too much to ask to have a little side of showmanship with our tunes nowadays? I'm not asking for everyone to revisit eight-foot liberty spikes and nut-cupping bondage pants, but I would like to be able to tell the difference between my favorite band and a camp counselor get-together. Can we please bring back the sass?
JIM RICE

GRAILS
Burning Off Impurities
Temporary Residence

This would make a great Mother's Day present if your mom got into yoga or smoking pot after the divorce. If not, I would stick with one of those fancy baskets of gourmet apples. They're a little more expensive but she won't give you that why-are-you-giving-me-an-instrumental-acid-rock-CD look. Trust me, it just happened to me a few minutes ago and I felt totally awkward.
TRICKLE PANTS

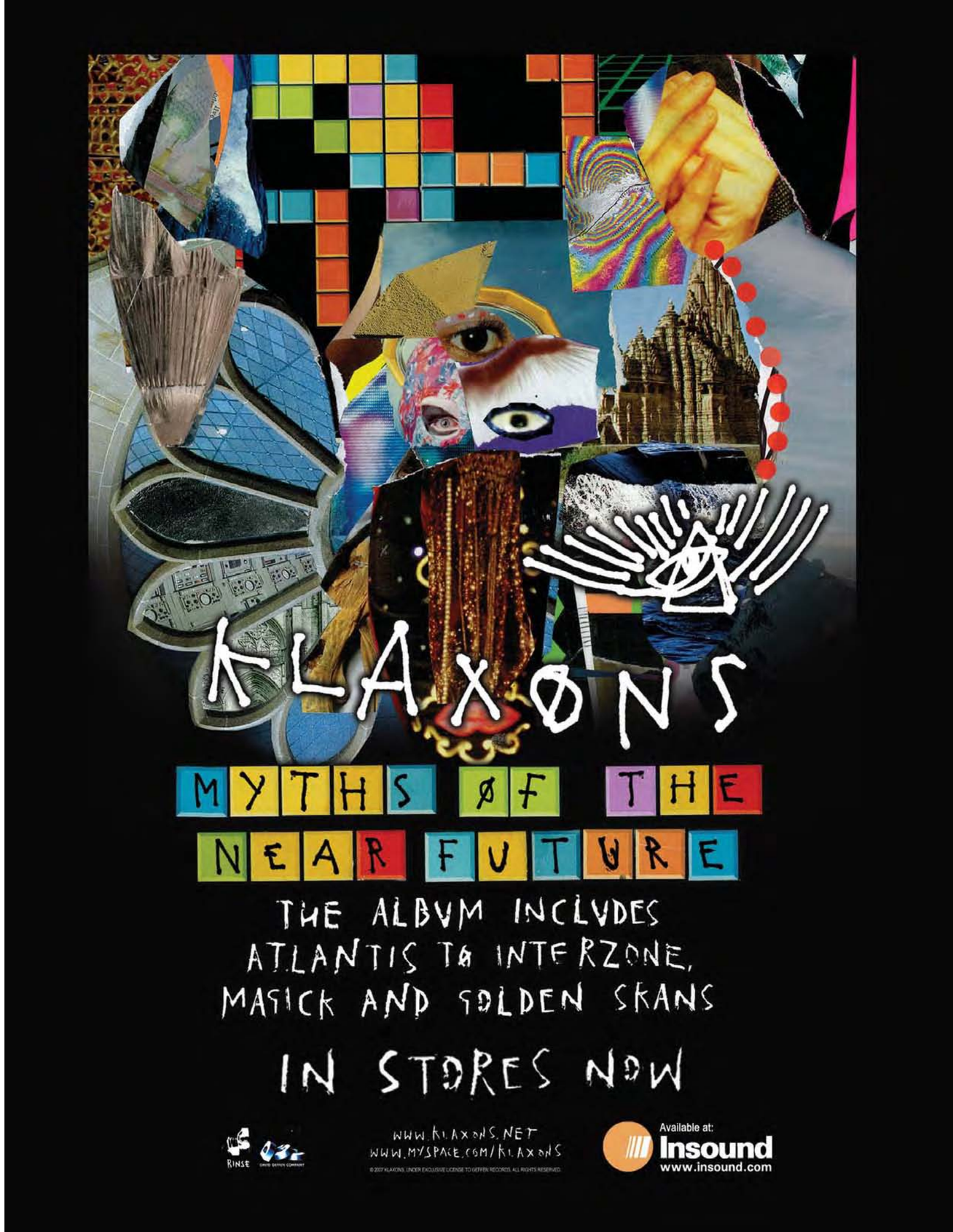
EARTH
Hibernaculum
Southern Lord

Just as the world had given up on Dylan Carlson, he struck a deal with the guys at Southern Lord, came off heroin, and started recording some of the best music of his career. *Hibernaculum* is three of Carlson's old songs redone in a spun-out cosmic country style, plus a song called "Plague of Angels" you probably know if you saw Earth play shows with Sunn 0))) a year or so back. Everyone complains about the drumming on the recent Earth stuff but I'm pretty sure it's actually supposed to sound like she's falling asleep at the kit.
OLI TAPISTONUS



DUNGEN
Tio Bitar
Kemado

Damn good elfrock here, and versatile, too—suitable for pleasant afternoon orgies in the dappled sunlight of a wooded grove, the occasional occult ritual,



BEST COVER OF THE MONTH: OOIOO

or for sitting around playing Final Fantasy. Makes you wanna sip dandelion wine and ask your girlfriend to let her armpit hair grow. Not a bad vibe at all. The world needs more stomping hippie fuzz like this.
GANDALF JOHANSEN

CLUTCH
From Beale Street to Oblivion
DRT

Hang on, aren't these guys supposed to be some sort of sludge legends or mainstays or whatever? Why does this sound like Lenny Kravitz sitting in on Blues Tuesday at the Dirty Bird with my Uncle Millard and a Dom DeLuise look-alike wearing sunglasses on bass?
TAD REFRENSKI

THE LOCUST
New Erections
Anti

The thing with making yourself a ridiculous cartoon of a band and taking every aspect of the scene you're from—in this case the aggro-cum-sissy speed, violence, and vanity of late 90s grind-/spazzcore—and pushing it to the point of caricature is that it can only really last as long as the scene does (see, for example, Thor). The second you pass that point, it's like the demon you bargained with waves his magic staff a second time and you revert from a pack of scary, manic dynamos to four pudgy guys in bug costumes playing in front of an empty audience with your instruments unplugged (even the drums somehow). The spell is broken, is what I'm saying. It may not seem fair, but it's the circle of life, and adding all the "version 9.9.9"s in the world to your name ain't gonna do nothing to stop it.
OIL CAN BOYD

VOXTROT
s/t
Beggars

If you spend most of your days riding a unicorn into the enchanted forest to ask very polite questions to baby deer about the meaning of rainbows, you might want to steer clear of this one—little pussy-ish for your tastes.
WADE BOGGS

LAVENDER DIAMOND
Imagine Our Love
Matador

That "You Broke My Heart" song was amazing the first kajillion times I heard it. I'm just a smidge over it now so I'm glad to have a whole new bunch of pretty prettiness to make my heart sing. Careful though: If your head's not in a totally calm place, Becky Stark's sometimes glass-shattering voice might be the last thing you hear before they find you walking the railroad tracks three states over carrying an oilcan filled with something frightening.
TRIPP JONES

BRAKES
The Beatific Visions
Rough Trade

Self-described "country-punk" translates to me as "yawn fart" since neither "country" nor "punk" are terms that hold any meaning whatsoever in 2007. That said, this is surprisingly not shitty. My initial impression is that Brakes' music is earnest without any of the bashful indie-rock chicanery I was braced for. Assuming I am right and they are not total dicks, I'm going to allow myself to like this.
COWBOY CRUSTY

PAGE FRANCE
...And the Family Telephone
Suicide Squeeze

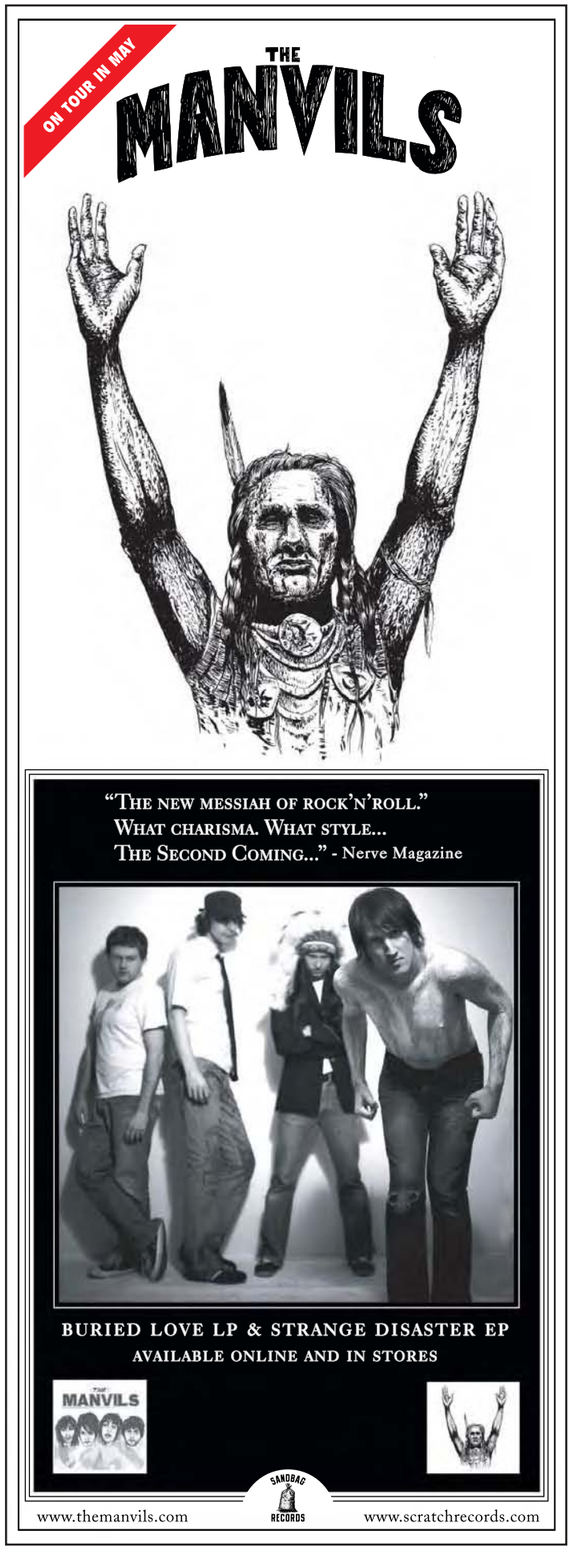
I don't know when I would listen to this. It sounds like a frog dishing about all his best friends at a party where he was invited partly because he is a nice guy and everyone wanted to see him, but also because they were kinda hoping he'd talk shit. It's silly and whimsical, with no more staying power than the Moldy Peaches. But, aw, it's endearing.
LOU WEED

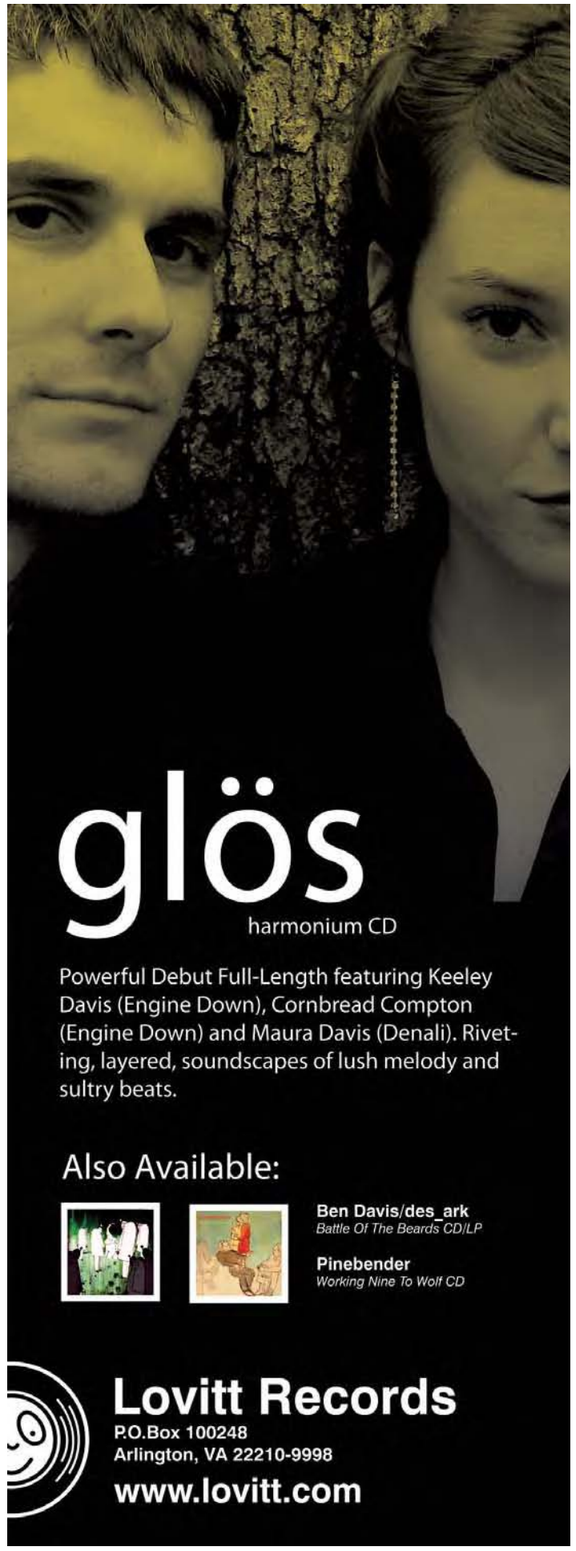
PAUL DUNCAN
Above the Trees
Hometapes

If you like your Nick Drake 40 years late and with a dollop of boring mixed in, then run, do not walk, to your local nouveau-folk purveyor and snatch up this violin-sodden masterpiece. Here's a quote from the genius himself: "I make music to appease the devil in me. He never sleeps." (Without a drop of irony. Not one.)
MUJAHID QUEBEC

LOVEDRUG
Everything Starts Where It Ends
The Militia Group

A sampling of the poetry included in the very colorful book found in the intricately decorated, de-embossed





WORST COVER OF THE MONTH: CEX

cardboard CD case: "If you are the cloud, then I am the snow/ If you are the rain, then I will not grow." Yikes. The singer gets so carried away with himself, he keeps yelling "Yeah!" any time the music gets intense. There's also a lot of falsetto, then growling at the height of a song, whenever he has to hold a note. Like in Christian rock.
BRUNO RETURNS

WILCO
Sky Blue Sky
Nonesuch

Hey, everyone who likes this band: Fuck you. You might as well listen to the Eagles. You also might as well sterilize yourselves, because if you have kids they are guaranteed to be assholes too. Sure, that might seem drastic but is it worth the uncomfortable phone call in 20 years to tell me I was right? Spare yourself the trouble and get it over with now. It's what your parents should have done.
ARTIE PHILIE

THE CLIENTELE
God Save the Clientele
Merge

When I write screenplays, I like to start with the soundtrack and work from there. Like that genius, Sofia Coppola. In accordance with *God Save the Clientele*, my movie would go like this: The protagonist, Jake, is having some bad luck. He has to go home and visit his dysfunctional family, who have lived in the same small town their whole lives. While in Riverton, Jake reconnects with Tracy, with whom he shared an unspoken romance in high school. She's a waitress. And it's Christmas!
ARMY MANN

AU REVOIR SIMONE
The Bird of Music
Our Secret Record Company

Does anyone else hear the Cranberries in this? Eh, pretty vocals either way. Just OK enough to squeak out of the coffee-house. But they are very pretty and on the back of the record there is a cool photo of them in their underwear near a pool, like they're about to go skinny-dipping together, which I'm sure they do all the time.
L. ROB & SON

PEEL
s/t
Peek-a-Boo Industries

You can't go wrong with a bunch of jolly honkies from Austin who play pop songs with fuzzy keyboards. I bet they love sharing strawberry milkshakes at the local soda fountain and "being good." It's like Stephen Malkmus and Belle & Sebastian adopted a litter of wiry, freckle-faced redheads and, instead of receiving severe beatings for the rest of their lives, the kids were taught how to play indie 90s tunes that don't make you feel gay for listening to them.
LAMAR LIVINGSTON

OOIOO
Eye Remix EP
Thrill Jockey

Eye Yamatsuka remixed two songs off OOIOO's last album and guess what? It is a sumptuous feast of roast pork loins for the ears. It is a group hug from 50 baby pandas while a marmoset French-braids your hair. There are more good vibes in the 20 minutes of this EP than in an entire army of bearded grade-school art teachers driving their beat-up old trucks down to the recycling bin. So recommended, you don't even know.
MEG SNEED

KNIVES OV RESISTANCE
Prisca Sapientia
Aurora Borealis

Soundscapes are bullshit—white noise to be listened to on an airplane when you want to read in peace but need something to focus on besides the baby crying a few aisles away. Knives, however, does its best to dig fingernails into your brain's outer layers as well as provide a canvas upon which one can vividly depict a screeching child being devoured by worms. Or, you know, whatever else you're into.
SHORT EYES

GANG GANG DANCE
Retina Riddim CD + DVD
The Social Registry

We love these guys. Everything they do has an air of "wow, totally" to it. Brian Degraw has made a hypnotizing piece of video art here, splicing bits and pieces of weird moments, pretty nature stuff, performance footage, home movies, kaleidoscopes, and funny bits into a visual and audio collage of nonheavy radicalness. It's what you call trippy. I think I watched the whole thing without blinking once. I feel bathed in a glow of sorts.
MEG SNEED

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Continued from pg. 109

recognizing my "criminal rehabilitation." In the past I've had to pay $250 for a temporary-residence permit each time we came here to tour, all for a resisting-arrest and obstruction-of-justice charge I got back when I was 18 years old.

My throat is in bad shape. I barely made it through last night's show. I've been coughing up thick yellow mucus all day long. I guess this is what you get for doing a Canadian tour in March.

Despite the physical maladies, all the shows continue to be above expectations.

MARCH 5: DRIVING TO DRUMMONDVILLE, QC, 12:15 AM

I have an addiction to Immodium AD. I usually start off each day by popping one or two pills, then I proceed to self-administer more as needed throughout the day. I have a nervous stomach. It's gotten worse over the years. Constantly touring, constantly stuck in a van or in a venue with no bathroom backstage and the only bathroom in the building has a door that doesn't lock and even if it does the toilet seat is covered in piss and the bowl is filled with beer cans, large shards of glass, and feces.

It's impossible to get on a regular poop schedule when you don't have a regular eating schedule. My nightmare is having to shit onstage. What would you do? Tell everyone to hold on for a second? Shit your pants? Please let me never have to find out.

MARCH 7: MONTREAL, QC, HOTEL GODIN, 12:30 AM

Played Montreal tonight at Le Studio. We've never played the club before. Nice size, horrible sound. My voice is still wrecked, so not having adequate monitors is frustrating. It's also frustrating that I'm doing everything possible to take care of my voice and it is still failing me. I'm not smoking, I'm not drinking. I'm even wearing the scarf that Mom got me for Christmas. Yesterday I asked Jordan to get me something for my throat while he was out running errands. He came back with suppositories. He said that it was what the doctor recommended. Sure enough the package did specify that they were for loss of voice. The codeine cough syrup makes it go down a little easier. Hell, it makes it almost enjoyable. How's that for suffering for your art?

MARCH 8: BROCKVILLE, ON, BEST WESTERN 2:51 AM

Last night in Montreal the Riverboat Gamblers' van got broken into. Fadi's bag, containing his clothes and passport, was stolen. So was Ian's guitar. The van was parked in front of their hotel. The thieves broke a window to get in. Ian said whoever broke in opened up all the guitar cases and chose which one they wanted. The asshole left behind Ian's sweaty guitar strap—took it out of the case and threw it in the back of the van. The window cost around $500 to fix. Regardless of how much the guitar cost, there is always a sentimental value attached to it. Your guitar is your friend—sometimes your only friend. Fucking Canadian junkies.

Despite the comically high stage and the barrier between us and the crowd, it was an amazing show tonight in Ottawa. The audience was with us all along.

MARCH 8, LONDON, ON, CALL THE OFFICE, 11:40 PM

Warren has made it abundantly clear today that he hates Call the Office. In all fairness it is a total shithole. It has horrible sight lines. There is a huge pole right in front of the stage. The walls backstage are covered with low-grade graffiti: band names that no one has ever heard of, crude drawings of penises and vaginas, nonsensical inside jokes.

"Anal Chutney!! Curry in your ass mo fo."

"Fuckin bitches without rubberss '07."

"Unicorns don't have wings faggot I know cause I've got three."

The couches, once orange, are now brown. They are greasy to the touch, covered in a mix of sweat, piss, snot, feces, barf, semen, and God knows what else. This will be our fourth time playing here. I can't help but think it won't be the last. I have a feeling that the rest of my life will be a never-ending version of this club each night. Somehow, I'm OK with that.

MARCH 10: PORT HURON, MI, COMFORT SUITES, 5:00 AM

Drove two hours after the show in Toronto to this hotel in Port Huron. We were trying to save time by crossing the border at night, when it's usually less busy. This was not the case.

While entering Canada as a band can be difficult, at least their border control staff are usually friendly. US border control are always assholes. Tonight was no exception. They act like they're doing you a favor even considering letting you back into the country you were born in. They act like they just might turn you away.

"What were you doing in Canada?"

"We're a band. We're on tour."

"How many days where you there?"

"Eight."

"So you came all the way from Florida to play shows in Canada?"

This is said with indignant disbelief. As if the idea of you traveling around freely is completely absurd. You are suspect.

"Yes."

"What, was there some kind of battle of the bands or something?"

"No, we're just on tour."

The usual round of questions follow. What's the name of the band? What kind of music? They don't really care. They're just asking so that they can tell their story of the time that Toby Keith came through. Toby Keith, Toby Keith, Toby Keith. The name is dropped with immense pride.

"I even got to step on the tour bus."

This is not only an expression of the border guards' musical taste, it is a proud display of their patriotism.

"Who's Warren Oakes?"

It's the beard. He's asking who Warren Oakes is because he has a beard.

"Right here…"

"You ever live outside the country?"

"No."

"You have any relatives who live outside this country?"

You mean Osama?

"No. Why? Do I have a look-alike?"

It takes around 45 minutes for them to check our passports and search the van. We don't get into the hotel until around 4:30 AM.

MARCH 12: DRIVING SOUTH ON I-55, ST. LOUIS, MO, 2:00 PM

The last time we played in Madison was over four years ago. It was a basement show. I remember we played with a band called Big Fat Ass. They gave us four copies of their self-titled debut album. It's always been my job to clean out the van at the end of each tour since I drive the van when we're not on tour. I ended up with all four copies of said album. I never listened to any of them. Who knows, it could have been genius.

Last night's show at the Orpheum Stage Door was the worst one on the tour so far. A horrible venue and a dead crowd. A little less than 300 people showed up, which isn't horrible for a Sunday night. The chairs were still left in the room, bolted into the ground, with a 20-foot gap between where the seats ended and the stage began. I thought the stage was going to collapse. There were a total of four lights on us: two on each side of the stage, with the lighting rig coming up to about my shoulder. Despite the expressionless faces and limited enthusiasm we were met with, I thought we played very well.

TOM GABEL

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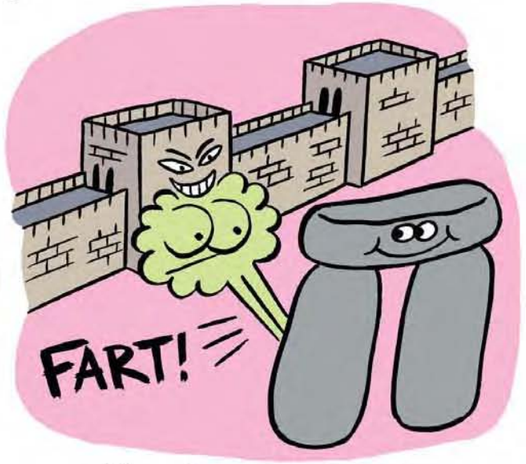
The great gangbang pyramids of Egypt.



Stonehenge farting on the great wall of China's tits.

Mount Rushmore receiving anal ecstasy from the leaning tower of Pisa.

The Eiffel tower giving a roman helmet to the Statue of Liberty.

JIMI HENDRIX
crossword

Across

1. Jimi covered one of his songs
3. Live mid-song SNL switch ala Jimi on BBC
5. Jimi's was "Bold as Love"
6. Color of Jimi's house?
7. Sorcery
9. Isle of _____ festival was one of Jimi's final shows
12. Three squared
14. First track on "Axis: Bold as Love"
16. The square root of 36
18. "Excuse me while I kiss the sky"
21. Lulu was Jimi's host here
23. Less dense than fog
24. Either Voodoo or Highway
25. "And the gods _____"

Down

1. She released her recording of "Voodoo Chile" in 1998
2. Woodstock venue owner
4. Francis _____ Key
6. Blues staple of many Jimi performances
8. Joss
9. Earth _____ and Fire
10. Excuse me, Joseph?
11. Seattle radio station
13. As if with stars
15. Color for Haze or Rain?
17. Uncontrollable
19. Paul Allen's Jimi-inspired museum, initially
20. Mythological effect?
22. "Let me stand next to your _____"

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LILY WHEELWRIGHT

1982-2007

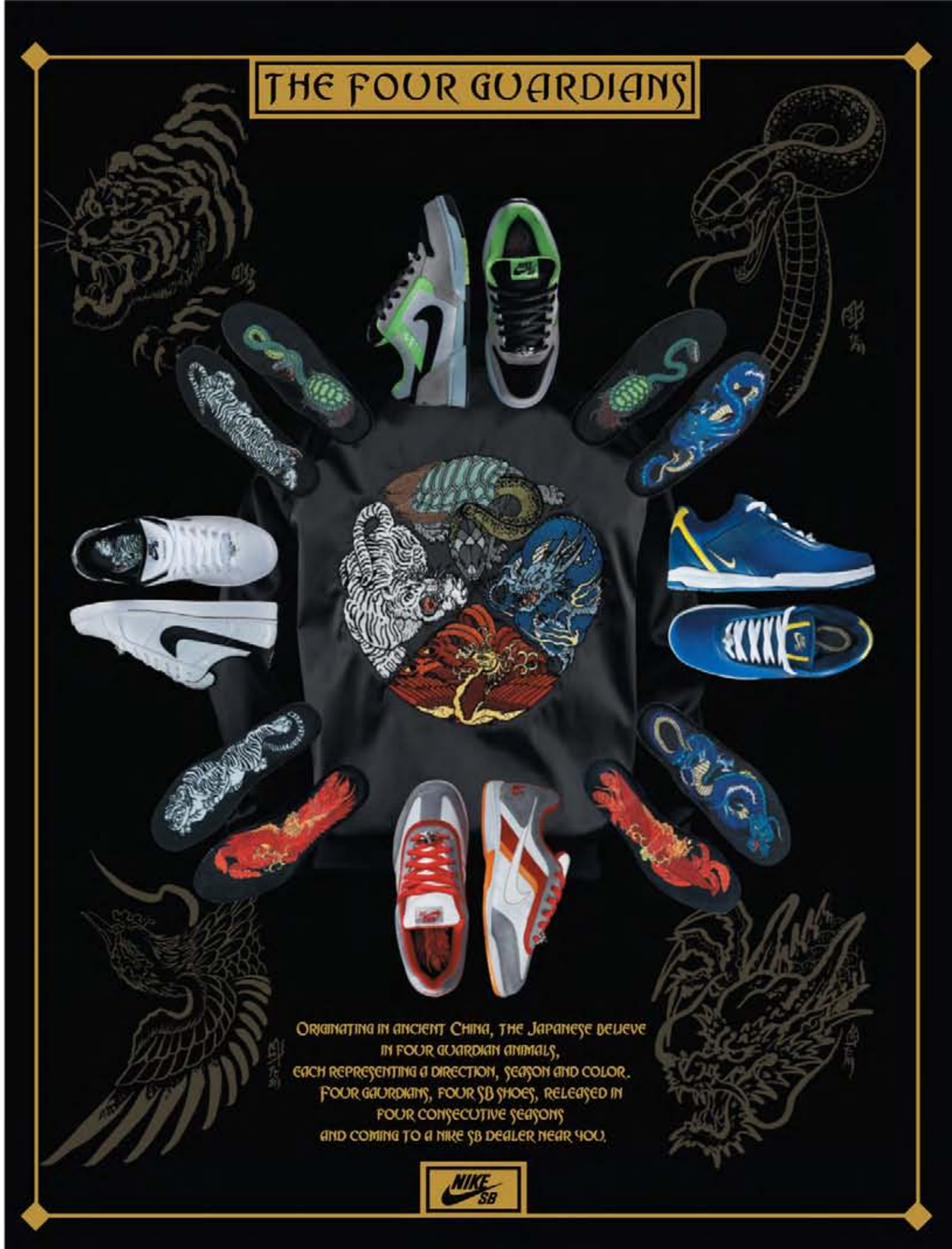
Lily was my friend and my favorite person to photograph. She was my muse. She was everyone's muse, really. We spent months driving cross-country together. Sometimes we'd drive for 14 hours straight and she'd be making everyone friendship bracelets and we'd just talk the whole time. She was probably the most adventurous girl I've ever met. During photo shoots everyone else would whine and say, "Oh, I don't want to get naked and run around at the drive-in," but Lily would just laugh and say, "Yeah, that sounds fun! Let's do it!"

When I did a naked bungee-jumping shoot, everyone else freaked out about it, but Lily was excited to do it. She was a beautiful tomboy. She was always looking for an adventure and never scared to get into trouble. And if we ever did get in trouble, Lily would always get us out of it. She could charm the pants off you.

The last time I was with Lily was in Paris. We ate dinner at this restaurant that was pitch-black and all the waiters were blind. Lily thought it would be funny to kiss someone in the dark. She felt her way around the chairs until she found a guy and then she kissed him. The guy followed her back to our table but she switched seats with me so that when he went to kiss her again, he ended up kissing me instead. We were laughing our heads off and then we got kicked out.

I really miss her.

RYAN MCGINLEY



Summer's coming.

Irene, 21 years old, is currently studying psychology on the East Coast. The Cali native though, who boasts a 1550 SAT score, will be returning west in two months to join our retail development team once her degree is complete.

She is seen here wearing our Micro-Poly Short Short, our tribute to (and aka) the Hooters Short. This sexy summer style is available in eight colors.

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